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LEO THE GREAT.

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BY

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LEO THE GREAT.

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LEO THE GREAT.



CHAPTER I.

THE AGE OF LEO.

OUR natural desire to know what great men were like when they were young, and what the circumstances of their youth were which moulded their capacity for control and command, is proverbially liable to be thwarted by lack of information. In the case of the great Fathers of the Church, we hardly expect to know much of their early years, and the deep interest which invests the youth of St. Augustine has not many parallels. Accordingly, of Leo the Great, before he became an ecclesiastical character, we can tell almost nothing.

He must have been born about the last decade of the fourth century, and a tradition of uncertain origin names his father, Quintius, and describes him as a Tuscan; while the citizens of Volaterræ go further, and claim him for their own city. On

the other hand he himself, and his contemporary and friend the chronicler Prosper, call Rome his *patria*, and the statement seems to outweigh a vague tradition, and entitle us to call Leo a Roman by blood, as he was in spirit, and, we may add, in religion.

Our ignorance of the circumstances of his birth and education is only an example of the obscurity which hides his private life from first to last. There is no private or domestic interest about Leo such as entwines itself around a character like St. Gregory of Nazianzum. Not only did St. Leo live wholly for the Church and for mankind, but his personal character seems almost merged and lost in the cause to which he has abandoned himself, and private feelings hardly find utterance in the stern and hard antitheses of his epistolary style. And yet in his sermons there breathes a tone of simple, earnest spiritual religion, which assures us of an intense devotion and quiet of soul underlying the manifold and unceasing activity of his outward life. In saying that we know nothing about his education we must perhaps make a slight exception. The polished and refined style of his letters, quite unlike the rough and formless Latin of the African writers, with all the merits and all the faults of a late phase of culture, is sufficient to assure us that he had a literary education : but we must add, that from beginning to end of his writings there is not a single indication of any acquaintance with the pagan literature of old Rome. Indeed the

ecclesiastical authority of an age when the literature of paganism was not yet quite a dead language, went for the present against a "classical" education ; and Leo was throughout life ignorant of Greek. More than this we cannot say ; but though our records are silent on the individual, general history will throw a little light for us on the circumstances of his youth.

Leo was born into perhaps the most important period of transition in the world's history, that stormy period which links the ancient and the modern world : the civilization of Rome and the civilization of Christendom. The great empire of Rome, which for four centuries had been almost conterminous with the known world, which seemed irresistible by the mere force of its name, and which in a condition of profound peace had been obliterating national distinctions, and uniting races the most opposite and the most remote in the bonds of commerce and a common government, was now being threatened, overwhelmed and dismembered in all directions by the barbarian hosts.

One by one the Imperial government was surrendering the provinces of the Empire, either to be occupied by the invading hordes, or to maintain for a time, like Britain and Armorica, a precarious independence ;¹ meanwhile the unity of the government had been finally surrendered by the separation.

¹ Britain was abandoned A.D. 409.

of the Eastern and Western Empires at the death of Theodosius the Great,¹ and the Imperial residence in the West, which had been removed for purposes of convenience at the beginning of the fourth century from Rome to Milan, was transferred by Honorius, from motives of cowardice, to Ravenna,² a city which art had done its best to fortify, and which nature had rendered almost inaccessible by surrounding it with impassable morasses. Here, out of the reach of danger, and remote from any natural centre of administration, was exercised in the future what shadow of authority still remained in the hands of the Emperor of the West.

For if the Empire was becoming contemptible, that contempt centred in the emperor. That supreme position, perhaps the most magnificent that it ever fell to the lot of man to fill, and which had in fact during the four centuries of the Roman Empire, from Julius to Theodosius, been filled by no inconsiderable proportion of the greatest of the world's rulers,—that position, which in pagan days had raised its occupant at once to the level of the gods, and still assigned to him a superstitious and unbounded veneration, was for nearly thirty years (A.D. 395–423) filled by Honorius, a man of whom it is related³ (and the story must at any rate represent the estimate which his subjects formed of his character) that he was alarmed to hear of the loss of Rome, till he learned

¹ A.D. 395.

² A.D. 404.

³ Procopius, tom. i. p. 316, edit. Bonn.

that it was not a favourite chicken of that name that was lost, but only the eternal city.

While the emperor was thus sunk in contemptible indolence the nobility of Rome seem as a class to have been not much more worthy of respect. The historian, Ammianus Marcellinus, who died about the time of Leo's birth, gives us an excellent picture of their character and manners.¹ They were extremely wealthy, extremely luxurious, extremely indolent, and extremely frivolous. They delighted in little but vanity and display. At the same time to degrading vices they added a gross superstition, often to be found among those who were sceptics or even atheists.

Meanwhile the plebeian population of Rome was a congeries of all the nations of the earth, drawn to Rome by the various attractions of the metropolis, the circus, and, above all, the enormous largess of provisions of various kinds which it was the pleasure of the emperors to lavish upon the populace of the capital.

Enough will have been said to show that neither in the emperor, nor nobility, nor plebeians of the capital were to be found the elements of social cohesion, solidity, or resistance, nor would it seem that much could be looked for from the diminished and still constantly dwindling population of the provinces.

¹ Paraphrased by Gibbon, cap. xxxi. vol. iv. pp. 77, *seq.*

Salvian, a priest of Marseilles and a contemporary of Leo, gives us a terrible picture of the morality of the Roman Empire of his day. His work, "On the Government of God," is a vindication of the ways of God to man, in abandoning the Roman Empire to the barbarians: the Christian world to the pagans and the Arians. It is the punishment of sins. "Among the chaste barbarians we alone are unchaste:" the moral purity of Vandal and Goth contrasts in all directions, in Germany, in Africa, in Spain, with the universal dissoluteness of the Romans.

To complete the picture we must add that almost the whole strength of the army of that date, such as it was, was to be found in the barbarians who had recruited its ranks.

At the time of the invasion of Alaric, though the troops were recalled from the provinces, even as far as Britain, to the defence of Italy, it was found impossible to raise an army composed of Roman legions without the assistance of Alani: and a few years later not only the assistance of Alani, Huns and Goths, but the recall of provincial legions and compulsory levies of new troops were necessary to enable Stilicho to raise a small army to oppose Rhodogast, but he was actually compelled to offer bribes to any slaves who would enlist.

Amidst all these elements of weakness and decay, into this last epoch of the Roman Empire Leo was born. One of his earliest memories would probably

have been of the awe and panic which seized the city of Rome at the news of the advance of Alaric¹ with his Goths, and of the burst of joy which hailed the tidings of Stilicho's great victory at Pollentia.² He may have seen the great general seated by the side of his unworthy emperor ascend in triumph to the capitol; and might even, had he wished it, have been present on the occasion of the triumph at the last gladiatorial games which ever disgraced the city of Rome.

If Christian education kept him from the spectacle, he would, at any rate, probably have read the appeal which the poet Prudentius took the occasion to present to the emperor against the blood-thirsty and inhuman sport;³ but if he were there he must have witnessed the martyrdom of the Asiatic monk Telemachus, who, as we are told, rushed into the arena to separate the gladiators, and died stoned to death by the indignant multitude, but by his death put a stop for ever to all similar combats.⁴

The victory of Pollentia seemed to revive for a moment the spirit of old Roman pride. The poet Claudian—a classical poet, “born out of his due time,” who across an interval of three hundred years linked his name with the great poets of Rome—ended his lines on the event by bidding the “mad nations

¹ A.D. 403.

² A.D. 404.

³ The peroration to the second oration against Symmachus.

⁴ Theod. Eccl. Hist. b. v. cap. 26.

learn not to despise the name of Rome ;”¹ and the inscription on the triumphal arch boasted that the “Gothic race had been for ever subdued.” It was, however, but a few years before the Gothic conquerors had the opportunity of reading this inscription for themselves.

Once more, in 405, the generalship of Stilicho delivered Rome from the danger to which it was exposed by the German hosts of Rhodogast. But the feeble emperor sacrificed to his jealousies or his fears that general who was the sole defence of his empire, and Rome lay a helpless prey to the enemy. Leo may have been present at the siege of Rome by Alaric, in 408 ; he may have suffered from the awful famine in which that siege involved the city ; and he must, at any rate, have heard of the insulting scorn with which Alaric at first rejected all terms the city could offer, and of the enormous sum which stripped the gorgeous city of its wealth, by which he was at last bought off. He must have watched after this the course of events, which made plain to any spectator that he was witnessing the last stage of the great city’s decadence.

Again, Alaric appeared before the walls of Rome : he set up Attalus, a creature of his own, as emperor, and again brought upon the city the pangs of famine : the mock emperor retired, but Alaric,

¹ De Bello Getico : “ Discite vesanæ Romam non temnere gentes.”

for the third time, appeared before the city. The gates were opened to him, and Rome was in his hands (A.D. 410). The sack of the city, that awful scene of carnage, conflagration, and plunder, which struck the knell of pagan Rome, and made an impression so deep and startling upon the imagination of Jerome in his far-off cell in Palestine, cannot have been lost upon the mind of the future pope ; joined with the whole of his life's experience it must have told him in tones he could not mistake that he lived amidst the break-up of the old world ; but one thing must have inspired his Christian heart with a glowing sense of exultation and confidence — the barbarian hordes, who mocked at the power of the emperor and the city, humbled themselves in solemn awe before the representatives and symbols of religion : among the smoking ruins of the city the churches rose intact : their cupidity shrank before the sacred vessels, and their lust before the consecrated virgins.

If paganism, with its last gasp, could accuse Christianity of having brought all this ruin on the city by making her unfaithful to her ancient gods, Christianity might, with far greater truth, reply, that whatever the causes which brought about the destruction of Rome, it was Christianity alone which could awe and control the new forces which were breaking over the world. The conviction of the impotence of the Western Empire must have been strengthened and confirmed in Leo's mind by the events of each successive year : on all sides were revolts and revolutions,

and the rise and fall of pretenders ; provinces were occupied by barbarians, and the defences of the Empire were entrusted to the Goths. Honorius died in 423, and was succeeded, after a usurpation of two years, by the infant Valentinian III., whose authority was exercised in his name for twenty-five years by his mother Placidia. Amid the universal decay of military spirit within the Empire there arose two generals of first-rate ability, Boniface and Aetius, "who may deservedly be named the last of the Romans." But the Empire, which could not even control the forces nature provided her with, was almost as much injured by their rivalries as assisted by their genius. It is the last sign of the decadence of a nation when she cannot even use her great men. The revolt of Count Boniface in Africa brought over there Genseric and his Vandals (A.D. 429); and though the Roman speedily repented of the invitation he had given them, his repentance came too late : the seven fair and populous provinces of Africa and her illustrious Church became a prey to havoc, murder, and desolation, which almost obliterated their name off the earth.¹ Such were the political events amongst which Leo grew to manhood and developed his mind and powers.

It remains to ask what were the theological circumstances of his education. He was born in a time

¹ The siege of Hippo was in A.D. 430 ; the taking of Carthage, 439.

when paganism was almost dead. The celebrated petition of Symmachus to the emperor for the restoration of the altar of victory (A.D. 384) was the last public effort of the old religion. In the year 388 A.D., it is related (and the story, at any rate, represents a truth) that the great Theodosius solemnly in full senate, according to all the forms of the Republic, put the question whether the religion of Jupiter or of Christ should be the religion of the Empire; and by a large majority Jupiter was deposed. Temples in Rome and in the provinces were, in some cases, emptied and closed, very generally destroyed, and occasionally converted into Christian temples. A second Julian and another pagan reaction were now no longer possible. A little later the Sibylline books, objects of such reverential awe under the old religion, were burnt by order of Stilicho. It was not, of course, possible that paganism should be extinguished all at once. The spirit and language of the poems of Claudian are wholly pagan; there were many to reproach Christianity with the calamities of Rome, many who were heard to say they feared the sacrifices of Rhodogast more than his arms; and, at the time of the great siege of Rome by the Goths, the city is said to have fallen back for succour upon the arts of Etruscan divination. But as a power in politics or society paganism was a dead thing; and after Claudian there was no longer even a literature to keep alive its memory.

Meanwhile, the Christian Church was consoli-

dating in East and West her doctrinal system. The achievements of Leo's later days will sufficiently prove his intimate acquaintance with the controversies of the East, and especially with the great Nestorian controversy which arose in his early manhood. His circumstances necessitated his connection with those of the West. The address of Augustine and the African council on the subject of Pelagianism reached Pope Innocent in the last year of his life (A.D. 417). The counter-appeal of Pelagius did not reach Rome till after his death; before this arrived, however, Innocent had addressed an answer to the African bishops, which at once assured them of his orthodoxy and support, and asserted broadly the authority of his see. Leo must have thus become acquainted with the great Western controversy on the subject of Grace, at the point where it was associated with the growing claims of the Apostolic see, and must have witnessed the blow which the authority of that see suffered by the new pope Zosimus's temporary acquittal of Pelagius and Cœlestinus. He was soon introduced in a more personal way into the controversy.

An acolyte, Leo, of whom we hear in the letters of St. Augustine, is sent in 418 to carry communications from Rome to the African Church on the subject of the heresy, and if, as seems most probable, this is the future pope, it is interesting to think that he must have come in personal contact on the way with the greatest of Latin theologians.

After this Leo seems to have risen rapidly into distinction. Under the pontificate of Celestine (422-432) he held the important office of Archdeacon of the Church of Rome, and he seems by this time to have been well known beyond the limits of Italy, and even in the East. He had pressed the Gallican Cassian, the legislator of Western monasticism, to write a work on the Incarnation, and Cassian in yielding to his solicitations calls him "the ornament of the Roman Church, and of the divine ministry." When St. Cyril, too, at the time of the Council of Ephesus (431) wishes to put a stop to the ambitious designs of the bishop of Jerusalem to obtain for his see the dignity of a patriarchate, and for that purpose seeks to secure the co-operation of Rome, it is to Leo that he writes, as to one who knows the secrets of the Apostolic see.

Some, indeed, on the strength of the position which Leo held at this time have tried to vindicate the authority of his authorship for some anonymous works directed against Pelagianism, or the semi-Pelagianism then prevalent in the Gallican Church. Though we have not, however, any good evidence for ascribing these works to Leo, we can have no doubt of his zeal against Pelagian error; indeed, the only authentic record of him under the pontificate of Sixtus (432-440) shows him to us keenly on the watch against the craft of the Pelagian Julian of Æculanum, who seems to have sought to be readmitted to the orthodox communion without

any real recantation of his errors. Thus educated and equipped in controversy Leo was chosen to lead the fight.

Amid the countless signs of decrepitude in the Roman Empire, none, as has been already indicated, was more marked than her inability to control and use in her service the talents of her generals, which, rightly directed, might have warded off for a time the impending ruin. Instead of fighting for the Empire, they fought with one another. One of those quarrels arose in Gaul, about the year 439, between the great general Aetius, in whose hands during the regency of Placidia the real power of the Empire lay, and a smaller rival, Albinus. Under the circumstances, with barbarian hosts ever ready to pour down upon Italy, such quarrels could not too speedily be put a stop to ; in the dearth of statesmen, men turned to the Church, and Leo, already conspicuous for dexterity and courage, was sent to negotiate a reconciliation. While he was away, in August, 440, Sixtus died.

There was no division of opinion, no danger of an anti-pope now, as there had been on the death of Innocent ; all Rome looked to Leo. He was promptly elected to the vacant pontificate, and an embassy sent at once to recall him to Rome. "For more than forty days," says the chronicler Prosper, "the Roman Church was without a bishop, awaiting with wonderful peace and patience the arrival of the deacon Leo." On his return, he was consecrated at

once, we must suppose, priest and bishop, on September 29; and the earliest of his works which survives to us is his short sermon upon his consecration. We are apt to scoff, very often unjustly, at professions of unwillingness to accept preferment. On this occasion, at any rate, Leo does not try our faith; on the contrary, he thanks God and the people for the favour done him, and asks their prayers for the success of his ministry.

It was a crisis difficult and trying enough to tax the best energies of the strongest and the most capable when Leo was called to the highest position in Christendom. In politics, while the empire of the East was in its normal state of "perpetual and premature decay," everything gave warning of the almost immediate collapse of that of the West. It had lost the more distant provinces and Spain, the Vandals held Africa, Sicily had been desolated, and Rome sacked; and while all was weakness within, the barbarian hordes were full of vigour and energy, wild and untamed, indeed, but replete with possibilities of development and future power; and the past had shown that, if they could be controlled at all, that power of control lay with the Church, and therefore with the central figure in the Church, the bishop of Rome.

There was wanted one who could appreciate the opportunity, and make the Apostolic see with its spiritual authority take the place of the tottering Imperial power; and if this was to be done, then Rome

and the Church must exhibit, amid the ruins of a falling world, an example of unshaken constancy. She must stand like the rock in the midst of the tossing waves. He then who could appreciate and rise to the opportunity must throw the power of a great intellect and a great spiritual influence into the scale of Church discipline and ecclesiastical solidity. Consistency, firmness, discipline, far-reaching organization in a solid and united Church, these were the qualities the age wanted, and that for the sake of theology no less than in the cause of social order. For, in the first place, the Goths who threatened to become in a great measure masters of the future were Arians by creed ; in the East, Nestorianism was still a power, and Eutyches, the heresiarch of the immediate future, was already an old man ; and in the West there were Manichæans, Priscillianists, and Pelagians to disturb the Church's peace and perplex the wearied hearts of men. Obviously, then, for social and theological reasons alike, an authoritative discipline was what was wanted in the Church no less than the world.

Learning, especially in the West, was almost dead : that sympathy, in which in later days the Church has too often shown herself wanting, which can appreciate and gently influence the half-disciplined struggles of a "new learning," was not then a need ; there was scarcely anything that was either intellectually subtle or morally respectable in the heresies of the day by comparison with the

Church ; under such circumstances, and in such an age, when large sacrifices must be made to the surpassing necessity for ecclesiastical unity, solidity, and strength, Leo, as bishop of Rome, was as completely as any man in history the right man in the right place. His moral character was simple, lofty, and severe ; and the ideal of the Christian life, which he realized in himself, he set his great energies, by word as well as example, to impress upon the minds of his flock ; but in this, as in everything, it was intensity and singleness of purpose which marked his influence, rather than breadth or freedom of sympathy. His mind expressed itself naturally in his firm and emphatic style ; there is nothing domestic about him, and though not wanting in generosity, he is perhaps deficient in gentleness, mildness, and forbearance. Thus, if we approach his character with sympathy, it is not hard to understand ;—even if we cannot love, we must admire him ; but if we are to appreciate him as he deserves, we must be ready to abandon the desire so natural to us for soft and domestic manners, we must enter into something of his large and imperial purpose, and feel that if Christianity is a soft and gentle influence in social life, it is also and before this an organization and a Church, the bearer of a Divine message of truth, and gifted with a Divine authority of government.

It will be judged from his personal character that Leo, as a theologian, would be practical rather than speculative, and we shall have evidence of this as we

proceed. There were no intellectual difficulties to prevent his unhesitating acceptance of the doctrines of the Church : he grasped them, he entered into, he understood them, not with the speculative intellect of the East, but the practical character of the West ; it is in their practical bearings he is especially fond of contemplating doctrines, and to the touchstone of practical consequences that he inclines to bring false opinions, an inclination which ought to commend itself to the mind of English people.

But it is for ruling, that the disposition of Leo was pre-eminently fitted. As the Church succeeded to the vacant throne of Rome, so the old Roman spirit of government passed into the great rulers of the Church ; the great command,

“ Tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento,”

might have been spoken to the popes as well as to the Cæsars, and Leo has been rightly called “the first Pope.”

In the smaller sphere of Church government he was rigid and stern in insisting on disciplinary enactments ; he neither admitted laxity in himself, nor could tolerate it in others : in the larger, he exhibited the disposition and to a great degree asserted, the authority of an œcumenical ruler : he had an overmastering sense of the indefeasible authority of the Church of Rome as the divinely-ordained centre of the Church's unity, and he had the Imperial power of watching and controlling the

movements of the Church's life in the most widely distant spheres at the same moment. Leo, in short, was a saint of the sterner kind in his life, a theologian of the practical kind in his sermons and writings ; and he manifested all through his activity the comprehensive grasp and energy of a world-ruler. To him, if to any man, the Church of Rome owes the uncompromising claim, the magnificent conception, of the Mediæval Papacy.

We may notice before we bring this chapter to a conclusion one circumstance of Leo's time, which facilitated, and even rendered in a measure necessary, the claim that he was to make and substantiate for his see : he was almost the only great man in Europe. Theodosius had been the last great emperor : there was nobody in the secular world of considerable importance in the West except Aetius, who was not more than a general. Among churchmen, St. Ambrose and St. Chrysostom had died while Leo was very young : St. Jerome had been twenty and St. Augustine ten years dead when he attained the Episcopate, and St. Cyril had but four more years of life.¹ To an age brilliant with names famous in theology had succeeded one in which the most noteworthy, with the exception of Leo himself, are those of Theodoret, Prosper, Cassian, and Hilary of Arles, while even heresy had not an able representative. "On

¹ St. Ambrose died 397 ; St. Chrysostom, 407 ; St. Jerome, 420 ; St. Augustine, 430 ; St. Cyril, 444.

the throne of Rome alone, of all the great sees, did religion maintain its majesty, its sanctity, its piety." Under such circumstances, it is no wonder that a man like Leo occupied a position of unusual prominence, and was able to exercise enormous influence for himself and for his see in the present and for the future.

CHAPTER II.

THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD.

THE question of the relation between the Church and the State is one of the highest importance in every age, and one which is continually presenting itself for solution in fresh aspects and unforeseen conjunctions. The answer to it is of the utmost significance in the middle of the fifth century. In the West, with which we are mainly concerned, the predominance of the Church was unmistakable.

For many centuries the bishops of Rome had been comparatively obscure persons: indeed, Leo was the first really great man who occupied the see, but he occupied it under circumstances which tended without exception to put power in his hand. The emperors had left Rome; and in leaving it left to the popes all the magnificent traditions of authority, all the imaginative reverence which could not but centre in the Eternal City. Year by year, as the emperors became more and more the shadow of a name, the popes became a substance and a reality. Amid weakness and inefficiency all around, or, what was hardly less disastrous, the rivalries of powerful captains, the emperor could but look to the Church

for support, for the Church showed some signs of power to control the barbarians ; and the chief importance in the secular history of the Church of the age lies in the authority she was enabled to wield over those untamed hordes. It was the ecclesiastical organization which gave the framework for modern society.

It is thus that arrayed as it has come down to us in all its legendary glory the celebrated meeting of Leo and Attila is a symbol, no less than a fact. Take the narrative in its most picturesque, if least historical shape, and it speaks to us, as from the celebrated canvas of Raphael : of the Church overawing and disciplining the uncouth barbarians. The Huns, with their hideous features and grotesque appearance, the very emblems of uncivilized force, headed by their powerful and fierce monarch, Attila, are threatening Italy and Rome. The Empire is paralyzed with fear ; it turns to the Church. Leo, the representative of religion, in his sacerdotal robes meets the wild conqueror before his own camp, and he whom arms could not stay trembles and bows before the peaceful priest. The great Apostles, the founders of the Church of Rome, threaten him with their majestic and supernatural presence if he refuses to withdraw, and, humbled before the forces of the spiritual world in heaven and in earth ; the hideous king returns upon his footsteps.

Such is the symbolical legend, but we must return to its counterpart in history. It was not without reason

that the Roman world trembled in a panic of almost helpless dread before the advance of the Huns. Their hideous and half-human Mongol form and features, the mystery of their origin, the resistlessness of their advance combined to make them dreaded as a supernatural portent. A trustworthy historian gives us as "the marks of the race," a stump stature, a broad chest, a big head, tiny eyes, a sparse beard, a snub nose, a hideous colouring ;¹ and Attila, their resistless king, was a true specimen of his race—"of a terrible presence, proud in his gait, rolling his eyes hither and thither, powerful in council, a lover of war but capable of controlling it, and ready to welcome and spare the suppliant."

This was the man and this was the race which carried so fully into practice their worship of the god of war and of the iron scimitar, by passing over Europe from East to West in "an almost unresisted career of victory and carnage." They had dealt with the Eastern empire insolently and almost at will—they dominated the Gothic and Teutonic tribes. Their trembling victims, as it were acquiescing in helpless submission to the tyranny of their awful king, called him the "scourge of God." At last he was met and defeated by Aetius in the battle of Chalons, but treating the defeat as nothing more than a check, the still terrible Hun turned southwards on Italy. Aquileia was taken and annihilated, the cities of Lombardy were

¹ "Teter colore." Jornandes, *De Rebus Geticis*, cap. 35.

ravaged, and the peninsula lay open before him.¹ The vicious and cowardly Valentinian fled in abject terror. Aetius if not treacherous, was at least helpless. In this extremity the emperor, senate, and people entrusted the hopes of the city to a peaceful embassy, and Leo, accompanied by the Consular Avienus and the Prefect Trigetius, undertook to meet the barbarian.

They found him on the shores of the lake Benacus where it receives the waters of the Mincius, with an army enervated partly, no doubt, by the unaccustomed luxuries of Italian fare and by the southern climate, partly also it would seem by dearth of food, and his own mind wrought upon by a superstitious dread of the fate of Alaric, who had not long survived the conquest of the Eternal City. Rumours, too, are said to have reached him of dangers of invasion at home, beyond the Danube. For his meeting with the ambassadors we are left to our imagination, but it may well be that with these motives for withdrawal already acting upon him, an additional impression was made upon his mind, susceptible, as it would appear, of religious impressions by the words and dignity of the Roman pontiff. At any rate the mission was successful, and he withdrew: not however tamely or without threats. He swore that Italy should suffer more than she had yet done if the Princess Honoria with her rich dowry were not

¹ A.D. 452.

sent him. This was the princess whose strange career illustrated the shameful degradation of the Empire. Among other adventures she had offered herself in marriage to the King of the Huns ; and avarice and ambition, more than anything else, induced him now to claim her. He did not however survive to execute his threats, but died on his return to his Hunnic kingdom beyond the Danube while he was celebrating new nuptials ; and his death dissolved his empire. His death was speedily followed by that of the general who alone had ever been able to defeat him on the field.

In a fit of contemptible jealousy the wretched Valentinian, "drawing the first sword he had ever drawn," murdered Aetius ; to quote the simple words of Marcellinus, the chronicler, "the patrician Aetius, the great defence of the Western State, and the terror of king Attila, was murdered by Valentinian in the palace with his friend Boetius : and with him fell the Empire of the West, nor has it been able ever yet to be raised again."

Meanwhile, the courage of Leo in meeting the fearful Hun had made a great impression both in the East and West, and within three years he stood out again once more as the preserver of the city. In the prosecution of his promiscuous amours the contemptible Valentinian was murdered at Rome (whither he had returned in March, 455) by the influence of a senator, Maximus, to whose wife he had offered violence. We cannot regret his death, but only its

consequences. The successful Maximus compelled the Empress Eudoxia to become his wife ; by confessing to her his complicity in the murder of her husband he raised in her breast a fierce desire of revenge. At her secret summons the victorious Genseric, king of the Vandals, who had passed from Africa to conquer Sicily, landed with a powerful force at the mouth of the Tiber. Maximus speedily perished in an insurrection of the populace with the followers of Eudoxia, but Genseric having set foot in Italy would not be satisfied without sacking Rome. The city was powerless. No armed force went out to meet the Vandal, but, instead, a peaceful procession of clergy, headed by their valiant bishop. In the interval of forty-five years since Rome had been taken by the Goths she had had time to recover something of her former splendour : it was not to be expected that the rapacious Vandal would have altogether abstained from pillage, and indeed it is somewhat difficult to find out what was the effect of Leo's prayers. "He induced him," says Prosper, "to refrain from fire, slaughter, or outrage:" however this may have been, we know, on the one hand, that Leo's remarkable courage extracted some concessions from the barbarian, and on the other that the city was pillaged for fourteen days. Leo succeeded in saving but three large silver vessels from the sack of the churches ; and by a curious combination of circumstances, the spoils of Titus from the Holy of Holies in Jerusalem, the golden table and the candlestick with seven branches,

were carried off to Carthage from the Temple of Peace at Rome by a barbarian from the shores of the Baltic.¹ Genseric returned with his vast spoils to Carthage, taking with him many thousand captives of both sexes, and amongst them the unfortunate empress whose invitation had brought him to Rome. This devastation may be said to have finally destroyed the pagan city, and the whole interest and glory of Rome henceforth centred in the Papacy.

We must notice that to neither of Leo's encounters with barbarian kings do we find any allusion in his own writings; what slight allusion we have to the circumstances which caused them refer exclusively to the religious duties of enduring correction, and of gratitude for deliverance. This is both remarkable and interesting. It shows us that Leo was superior to the weakness of vanity, and if he was the saviour of his country, was not inclined to boast of it.

We have seen how the State could avail itself of the services of the Church, it remains to see how the Church could make the State its instrument. Speaking generally, we may say there is no attempt in the Western Empire of this date to control the Church. There is, indeed, a rescript of Valentinian, dated in 452, which seems to be aimed at the judicial power in civil matters exercised by bishops. The importance and force of this rescript are not clear. The great Roman Catholic champion, Baronius, sees

¹ Gibbon, iv. 257.

in the invasion of the Huns and the murder of Valentinian a divine judgment on this attempted invasion of the rights of the Church. Leo says nothing about it, and at any rate he had not in general any cause of complaint against the emperor on the score of resistance to Church authority.

When Leo was in conflict with Hilary of Arles (A.D. 448), he seems to have thought it desirable that the secular power should back up his spiritual authority. Accordingly, a rescript was obtained from the emperor, the terms of which are certainly remarkable. It speaks of the merits of St. Peter, the dignity of Rome, and the authority of a council, as conspiring to confirm the primacy of the Roman bishop, and warns men that "the peace of the Church will not be secured till with one consent it recognise its ruler." The document goes on to condemn, wholly from Leo's point of view, the conduct of Hilary, and to approve the pope's requirements. "His commands," it continues, "would, of course, have been valid through Gaul, even without the Imperial sanction; for what can be beyond the authority of so great a pontiff in the affairs of the Church?" Still it is thought desirable that the Imperial authority should intervene; and "this is our perpetual injunction, that the bishops, neither of Gaul, nor any other province, be allowed contrary to ancient custom, to attempt anything without the authority of the pope of the Eternal City; but that for them, and for all, the law shall be whatever

the authority of the Apostolic see has or shall have ordained." The assistance of provincial magistrates is then promised to compel the attendance of recalcitrants at the command of Rome. Such a constitution ought to have pleaded, surely, in the eyes of Baronius to obtain for Valentinian a natural death! It is of course a purely Western document, though it bears the name of both emperors; and we regret, as we read its extravagant language, that Leo, in the hour of struggle, should not have been able to resist the temptation of extracting anything he wanted out of the feeble-minded emperor.

He was able on another occasion to use the influence of the Western Court to endeavour, though unsuccessfully, to move the Eastern, which he did not find nearly so subservient. In his relations to the Court of Theodosius, we are constantly reminded that the summoning of councils was dependent upon "the commandment and will of princes." It was the emperor who summoned the Council of Ephesus in 449, and Leo, though he always speaks most respectfully,¹ is inclined to complain that at least he should have been given longer notice. The occasion, the place, and the time were all decided by the emperor, and Leo sends his apologies for not attending in person. Afterwards, when the council had ended so disastrously, Leo

¹ We do not think that, judging by the standard of the official language of the day, we need accuse Leo of much flattery or over-obsequiousness.

wholly fails to obtain from the emperor permission for a new synod to be held in Italy, and the control of the emperors in this matter is only an example of the general interference in ecclesiastical matters in the East to which Leo has to give a constant practical recognition. Indeed, he constantly calls upon them to do the Church's work, especially when he could not altogether depend upon the ecclesiastical authorities. In theory, Leo holds that the civil and ecclesiastical authority should be very closely united. "Human affairs cannot," he says, "be safe unless the royal and sacerdotal authority combine to defend the faith." "Your empire," he tells the Emperor Leo, on his accession, "is given you, not only to rule the world, but to defend the Church." And he can give a prince no higher praise than to ascribe to him a "sacerdotal mind." So intimate, indeed, is the relation he would have to exist between Church and State, that he would visit ecclesiastical error with civil punishment. Unlike St. Martin of Tours, and St. Ambrose, he even apologizes for the execution of Priscillian the heretic, who, for the first time in the history of Christianity, was put to death for his heresy by the secular arm;¹ "for," he writes, "though the forbearance of the Church, contented with a sacerdotal sentence, is unwilling to take a bloody revenge, yet at times it finds assistance in the severe

¹ A.D. 384. It is possible, however, that Priscillian was put to death not for heresy but for magic, under a law of Valentinian and Valens. See Milman's "Lat. Christianity," i. 251.

commands of Christian princes, because the fear of punishment for the body sometimes drives men to seek healing for the soul." Without approving the sentiment, we must remember that there is more justification for subjecting religious error to civil punishment in a half-barbarous age than in our own.

These remarks may be sufficient to indicate the relations of Church and State in East and West under Leo's pontificate of twenty-one years.

CHAPTER III.

LEO AND THE MANICHÆANS.

A MAN of Leo's orthodoxy, with a will so dominant and a purpose so strong, placed where he was in an age like the fifth century, must inevitably have come in conflict with numberless heresies. If there was one truth committed to the Church, and that truth was to be preserved, the task of preserving it must mean battle. Nor was Leo a man to shrink from the necessity. Accordingly, we find him coming more or less in contact with almost all the manifold heresies then troubling the world. We do not, however, propose to allude to all the smaller conflicts of which we may find mention in his writings, but rather to confine ourselves to the one or two great struggles which made his life famous; and perhaps it will be well to say at starting, for the benefit of those who may be unused to the language of such conflicts, that we have to do with men who, whatever their shortcomings, were terribly in earnest; and we must not expect to find soft actions and mincing words.

Believing with a steadfastness of simple faith that God had committed One Truth to His Church to be the guide of the intellect and the salvation of the

souls of men, it was impossible for them to speak and act (orthodox and heretic are mainly alike in this) as if religious opinions were a matter of indifference, and as if error had no influence in producing sin—a corrupt doctrine a corrupt life. This habit of mind had, of course, its dangers. It tended to make defenders of the faith harsh and inconsiderate in their zeal for God's truth. It was difficult for them to remember that though the rejection of divine truth was the soul's condemnation, they could not really appreciate from outside the extenuating circumstances of this or that particular case. It was not in the spirit of the age to recall this to their minds ; it was an age which dealt with men in masses. Thus they seem sometimes, as was said, inconsiderate in their sweeping and general condemnations and dogmatic assurance. Moreover, the literary character of their surroundings was not refined, and they called one another hard names without scruple, and sometimes without justice. These were the special faults of their time ; on the other hand, their method had this advantage that, at a time when men specially needed clear and uncompromising doctrine, it held up before them in an unmistakable way a system of truth as literally divine and absolutely authoritative, and warned them in very plain terms that they rejected it on their eternal peril.

Our age is very different from theirs, and we find it hard to accept their method. We have our virtues—more individual considerateness, more gentleness of

dealing, more intelligent sympathy; on the other hand, the dangers to which we are exposed are at least not less than theirs, and we are fully in a position to profit by their example and by the tone of their minds. We are apt to talk as if what a man "happened to believe" were matter of comparative indifference; as if opinion had no effect on life; and it is considered hardly politic or polite to insist very strongly on the divine authority of a doctrine; it would be wiser to shelve the Athanasian Creed, we think, which is the legacy to us of Leo's age. That this state of mind is worldly, and not the Christianity of the Bible or the Church, we shall probably admit, even when we are ourselves imperceptibly influenced by it, and it may, therefore, have a bracing and wholesome effect upon our mind to try and enter into the vigorous, uncompromising sternness of another age, "contending earnestly for the faith once for all delivered" in simple trust and total self-sacrifice; perhaps we shall be inclined to excuse even a little violence, and shall sometimes seem to see a more real charity breathing in stern words than in all the indifferentism of modern talk.

Without more apology we approach Leo's conflict with the Manichæans. This sect stands unrivalled in the world's history for the strange vicissitudes of fortune which it has undergone, and the intense tenacity of life which it has exhibited. "In vain proscribed, persecuted, deprived of the privilege of citizens, placed out of the pale of the law by succes-

sive imperial edicts; under the abhorrence, not merely of the orthodox, but of almost all other Christians, it was constantly springing up in all quarters of Christendom with a singularly obstinate vitality." It would seem that recent troubles, and especially the capture of Carthage by Genseric, in 439, had driven a very large number of persons belonging to the sect to Rome, and their ranks were doubtless recruited from the secret votaries of paganism. They were noted there moving about with pale faces and shabby clothes. They were observed to fast when the Church was not fasting, and to make distinctions of meats. These peculiarities of appearance and life sufficed to mark them out to the vigilant eye of Leo, though they seem to have wished to escape notice and pass as Catholics; for Church and State alike hated Manichæism,—and no man in the Church more than the then bishop of Rome. For this hatred he had reason enough, theological and moral.

It was the great theological task of Leo's life, as we shall have occasion to see, to maintain the real, full, and abiding humanity of Jesus Christ. He had taken our *whole* human nature, will, conscience, heart, soul and spirit, and not that only, but *body* too. That flesh, which sin had so thoroughly and often defiled, He had taken and redeemed and sanctified by uniting it to Himself. The lowest is joined to the highest. The material body, of the earth earthy, has been taken by the Almighty Creator to

Himself. From henceforth then let no man speak lightly of the material world, for in man it is united to God.

Of the truth of this Leo had an intense and passionate conviction, while the denial of it was the mainspring of all systems akin to the Manichæan. There is a dreamy tendency in Eastern philosophies, hardly intelligible to our English common sense, to say that matter, as such, is evil. We cannot enter at any length here into an explanation of the way in which Manichæism developed this idea; it is of course St. Augustine and not St. Leo who is identified with its refutation. We can only say here that, according to the Manichæans, there were two principles at war in the world, the good principle, which is God, and the evil principle which is matter, or the things of sense as such. It is against opinions akin to these, we must remember, that St. Paul in his later epistles has to fight—against men “who forbade to marry” and “commanded to abstain from meats.” It was of course incumbent upon a Manichæan, as a natural consequence of his opinions, to deny the possibility of an Incarnation. God and matter, these were the eternal foes; between them was waged the unending war in every particle of the universe. A reconciliation, an atonement of the highest and the lowest, God taking flesh, these were ideas most repugnant to the philosophy of Manes, and Leo has, therefore, every theological reason to hate Manichæism. Indeed, “the Manichæan impiety” is the common expression

by which he characterizes all denials of the real and full humanity of Jesus Christ.

And he had fully as grave moral reasons for his antagonism to it. If we believe that the material and the sensible is the evil, that belief may reduce itself to practice and influence our lives in two different directions. It may make us struggle to be as far as possible separate from the flesh, to trample out all carnal impulses, to mortify, to slay, to crush the body; that is to say, it may exalt asceticism as an end in itself, not merely as a measure of self-discipline, and reckon every suffering inflicted on the body as a blow aimed at a mortal foe.

But this philosophy may also have (and in fact has had in history) a quite different tendency. For with all our efforts we cannot escape from the body; there the spirit is, entangled in its meshes, indissolubly bound up with it in all its actions and in every motion; we may rack our every limb with torture, but with what result? We must feel and handle and eat, that is, we must have to do with evil and be contaminated by it. What matter then a little more or less? Is one act worse than another? Nay, rather since by the very law of our nature we are involved in evil, let us give up the struggle; all physical life is alike evil, and therefore the mode of life is a matter indifferent. By some such process of thought as this the same philosophy may lead to the extreme of self-maceration, and to the extreme of

license, or to a life made up partly of asceticism and partly of license, a compromise not unacceptable to the average inconsistency of human beings, and which may have been embraced by some of the Manichæans of Leo's day. If they attracted attention by their fasts on the one hand, they were convicted of flagrant immorality on the other. In the year 444 a diligent search was made for the disciples of the sect throughout Rome by Leo's orders, which resulted in the discovery of a very large number of teachers and disciples, amongst whom their "bishop" was taken. They were brought up for trial before an august assemblage of civil and ecclesiastical authorities, and there is no possibility of doubting the evidence which tells us that confession was made of hideous immoralities in their secret assemblies, immoralities seemingly public and ceremonial.

Once again in the history of this sect the full vials of ecclesiastical and Imperial wrath were poured out upon them. They were subjected (those, that is, who would not make retraction of their errors and embrace Catholicism) to perpetual banishment and to all kinds of civil penalties, by an edict of Valentinian reviving the laws of previous emperors ; and Leo, by sermons and letters, did his best to make their shame ring through Christendom, and succeeded, in fact, in stirring up bishops both in East and West to emulate his activity. To exhibit the strength of Leo's feelings on Manichæism, it is only necessary to quote two sen-

tences from his sermons, in which he says, that "while the devil, under various guises, holds his dominion in all errors, his citadel he has built in the madness of the Manichæans, and found there the amplest room wherein to walk at large with more vaunting arrogance, where he may lord it over, not one form of corruption, but a mixture of all errors and impieties in general. The profanity of the pagans, the darkness of carnal Jews, the illicit arts of magic, in a word, all the blasphemy and sacrilege of all heresies—all has flowed together and meets here as in the common cess-pool of all corruption." "All other heresies, however justly to be condemned, have yet a hold, each in their way, of some element of truth, but in Manichæism there is nothing which, from any point of view, can be regarded as tolerable."

Before passing on, we may pause a moment to notice one effect which Leo's efforts against this sect had on his own mind. In the spirit of the whole Catholic Church he insists on the value, and even necessity of fasting, that is, of bodily self-discipline in its widest sense. But whereas sometimes ascetic zeal has hurried part of the Christian world into an almost Manichæan hatred of the body, Leo is specially careful to maintain the true disciplinary principle. "Salutary is the mode of life," he says, "which uses a spare diet, and restrains the appetite for delicacies; but woe to the opinion of those who turn even fasting into a sin! For to the injury of the Creator they condemn the creatures; and those that eat are, in

their eyes, contaminated, eating what the devil, and not God, has made. Nay, but no substance is in itself evil: evil itself has no *nature*.¹ The good Author of all made all things good, and whatever has been given to man for food and drink is holy and clean. It is gluttony, not food, that makes men impure."

Fasting therefore is a means, not an end; and this is constantly insisted on in Leo's sermons: it is a means towards making the body apt for pure, holy, and spiritual activity; towards subjecting the flesh, as he often says, to the reason and spirit. "A man has true peace and liberty when the flesh is ruled by the judgment of the mind, and the mind is directed by the government of God."² "What good has been done by weakening the flesh without strengthening the soul?" "Therefore, we must indeed refrain from food, but it is more important to fast from errors."

Again, because fasting has this directly moral object, it should show its rationality by being joined to works of mercy. "The abstinence of the faster must be the refreshment of the hungry." The sick, the weak, the exile, the orphan and the widow, must feel the benefit of our chastisement of the flesh.

¹ *I.e.*, evil is not a positive quality, a substance among substances, but is a mere *negation* and *defect*: what exists becomes evil not by acquiring something new, but by *losing* its true quality.

² Sermons 42, 2, 4, 39.

Fasting which is not joined to such works of mercy is a mere carnal affliction, not a purification of the soul ; and if a man is too weak to fast, let him occupy himself in works of love. In all this, as in the whole of Leo's Christianity, we notice a total freedom from superstition and morbidity of mind, a freedom not generally attributed to the saints of the fifth century, for St. Leo was a contemporary of St. Simeon of the Pillar.

Having dealt thus sternly and successfully with Manichæism in Italy, Leo, a few years later (A.D. 447) comes into indirect collision with the kindred heresy of Priscillianism in Spain. The death of Priscillian had, as is usual in similar cases, failed to suppress his opinions, which were at the time especially prevalent in Spain, his native country. This heresy was in its foundation Oriental, and akin to Manichæism : it was Sabellian in its denial of a real Trinity, more than Arian in its doctrine of Christ, and as it added the practice of magic and astrology to its other errors, we may well suppose that it would have met with no lenient treatment at the hands of Leo. The state of Spain, overrun by Suevi, Goths, and Vandals, who were Arian as far as they were Christian at all, was favourable neither to orthodoxy, nor to any sort of political order. The bishops could not meet in synod, and discipline was in a state of collapse. The heretics were living as Catholics, and even the bishops were conniving at, if they were not tainted by, their opinions. Leo, not being on the

spot, could only act mediately by stirring up the bishop Turibius to activity against them, and we hear of more than one council which seems to have been due to his inspiration. We may pass now over minor conflicts, and come to consider Leo as the great champion of the Incarnation against the heresy of Eutyches.

CHAPTER IV.

EUTYCHIANISM.

THE heresy of Nestorius, which may be said in a sense to have given rise to that of Eutyches, dates from the year 428. It was finally condemned in the third General Council, held at Ephesus in 431. It was not like the heresy of Arius, a denial of the real Godhead of Jesus Christ, or like that of Apollinarius, a denial of His real manhood, but it was a denial of the perfect union of the Godhead and the Manhood in the one Person. The Catholic expression which Nestorius could not tolerate was the title "Theotocos"¹ applied to the Virgin. "The child of two or three months old I cannot call God," he said. What was born of Mary was a man to whom the Eternal Lord united Himself.

The great opponent of this heresy was the famous St. Cyril, bishop of Alexandria; but in the ranks of his followers there was none more zealous among the zealous monks, or more strenuous in insisting on the unity of the Person of Christ than the Archimandrite, Eutyches, who

¹ "Mother of God"—more exactly, perhaps, "God-bearer," for the point emphasized by the term is not the dignity of the mother, but the nature of the Son.

became the author of the next great heresy in the opposite extreme. Upon this man's moral character no slur has been cast ; he was simply a somewhat narrow-minded person, of great intensity and obstinacy of conviction, untempered either by real theological insight or by moderation and balance of judgment. He had, as it were, learned the orthodox formula in its extremest form, and brooding on this, without any regard to counter-truth, he lost the proportion of faith, and, without intending it, found himself a heretic, asserting that in Christ Incarnate there was no real *human nature*. The character of his temper is consistently recognised by his great Western opponent, St. Leo, who calls him "unskilful," "ignorant," "imprudent," "obstinate," but shrinks from harder names.

Against this man a petition was presented at a council held at Constantinople in November, 448, by Eusebius, bishop of Dorylæum, characterizing him in the language of the theological controversies of the day as a blasphemer and a madman. This language was, indeed, thoroughly suitable in the mouth of Eusebius, a man of unswerving and impetuous orthodoxy, but with no mildness or considerateness of temper. While still a layman he had denounced Nestorius, and in their common opposition to the impugner of the unity of Christ's Person, he and Eutyches had been allies and friends. Gifted, however, with theological perception more accurate than Eutyches, he became alarmed at

the one-sided exclusiveness of his old ally's doctrine, which seemed to deny the reality of Christ's human nature, and with the violence of character which was natural to him he became his bitter enemy. His bitterness shocked the Archbishop Flavian, who then presided over the Church of Constantinople. "Your petition," he said, "astounds us when we think of the reputation of the man against whom you bring it." Could not Eusebius deal with Eutyches in private before bringing a public accusation against him? No, said Eusebius; Eutyches had once been his friend, and he had repeatedly warned him in vain of the course he was pursuing, and he could go no more to hear his blasphemous words. Still remonstrating with Eusebius for his violence the council nevertheless acceded to his request that Eutyches might be summoned.

Meanwhile, the bishops assembled professed in varying terms their orthodox belief in the two natures of God and man united in Christ's Person. Twice was Eutyches summoned in vain. "His monastery was his tomb," he said; "he could not leave it: on that he was fully determined. Besides, Eusebius was his personal enemy, and brought this accusation out of malice. He was ready to sign the decrees of Nicæa and Ephesus; but, better than all, he preferred to hold to Scripture. After the Incarnation he adored *one nature* of God made man." He was also reported to deny that Christ was of one substance with us. A mere report, however, St. Flavian

would not willingly accept. He still trusted Eutyches would come before the synod and repent of his error. He showed the council the temper of mind in which they should act towards the wanderer from the faith by reminding them how our Lord had been at pains to seek out the lost sheep, and how He rejoiced over the return of a penitent. Again and again Eutyches was sent for, but he was daily becoming more obstinately determined not to leave the monastery, and was trying to raise up a monastic party to support his views. Eusebius, meanwhile, "compared to whom," as Flavian said, "fire was cool," was growing furious, and urged that Eutyches should be brought by force. At the next session of the council the accused sent a monk to say he was ill. "He groaned all night," the monk said, "and could not sleep; he kept me awake with his groaning." Still the archbishop was gentleness itself. "We would not be hard on him—we will wait till God makes him well; we wish him nothing but good. God delights not in the destruction of the living: we are not the children of inhumanity, but the children of the mercy of God."

At last Eutyches came, and in such a way as to show how he had profited by the delay, for he was accompanied by a great crowd of soldiers, monks, and officers. He professed to be in great peril from Eusebius, and refused to enter the council without security for his personal safety. He brought also with him an Imperial order that the patrician Florentius should

have a seat in the council. "As we know him to be faithful," said the document, "and of approved orthodoxy, we will him to be present at the deliberations of the council, because the question is one of the faith." A long dialogue now followed, in which Eutyches was most unwillingly brought to the point. He professed unwillingness to speculate on the nature of the Godhead, asked where Scripture speaks of "two natures," and asserted his agreement with the doctrine of St. Cyril. At last, however, in answer to a final question of the patrician Florentius, "Do you confess that our Lord is of one substance with us, and of two natures after the Incarnation?" he was forced to the assertion, "Christ was of two natures before the union, but after the union I acknowledge one nature." In support of this position he appealed to Athanasius and Cyril, and from it he could not be moved. He was therefore condemned in the usual form. "Bewailing and lamenting his complete ruin, we," the bishops said, "decree through our Lord Jesus Christ, who has been by him blasphemed, that he is thrust out from all priestly office, and from our fellowship, and from the presidency of his monastery: and be it known to all men who after this converse with or visit him, that they lay themselves too under the sentence of excommunication, because they have not abstained from intercourse with him."

It is at this point that Leo enters into the controversy. It appears that Flavian wrote to Leo as to other distinguished bishops, giving an account of the

action of the council. For some cause, however, his letter was delayed. Leo's first information on the controversy and its result came in the shape of an appeal from Eutyches, and a letter from the emperor which seems to have been also favourable to the condemned opinions. Eutyches, of course, asserted his orthodoxy, pleaded his old age, and attempted to get the pope on his side by representing, apparently not with truth, that he had appealed to Rome from the council, and his appeal had not been listened to or allowed. He had, in fact, made no public appeal at all, but had intimated to Florentius privately that he appealed to "the Roman, the Egyptian, and the Jerusalem Councils." Though Eutyches' professed submissiveness to the judgment of the see of Rome was all Leo could have desired, and though he had previously had occasion to commend his zeal against Nestorianism, he was too wise a man to repeat the mistake of his predecessor Zosimus in the case of Coelestius and commit himself without further information. He writes to the emperor to lament his ignorance of the real state of the case. To Flavian he complains vigorously of the want of information, and demands an explanation of the treatment to which, on his own showing, Eutyches had been subjected. Meanwhile, however, the arrival of Flavian's account of the matter was sufficient to secure Leo's adherence to the sentiments of the council, and a letter to Flavian assures him of his sympathy. This is followed in June, 449, by "the

Tome," or doctrinal epistle, a document of great celebrity, which, while it is nominally a letter to Flavian, is really addressed to the ecclesiastical world at large. In itself it is a sign of the times: for here we have a Latin bishop, ignorant of Greek, defining the faith for Greek-speaking bishops, in view of certain false opinions of Oriental origin; but the document is still more remarkable for its contents than for the circumstances which produced it. Before, however, attempting to give an idea of what these are, it is necessary to pause and ask what is the significance of the heresy of Eutyches, and whether it was really necessary for the Church to take such serious notice of it.

Nothing is easier than to represent the condemnation of Eutyches as an example of ecclesiastical pugnacity and theological hair-splitting. Here was a man who had grown grey in orthodoxy, nay, more, had worn himself out in defence of the truth of Christ's Divinity, accused in extreme old age by a man who seemed to represent the very spirit of bitterness. The accused man was no rationalist, no conceited and impertinent impugner of authorities, on the contrary, he constantly appeals to Church authorities, only he prefers to be satisfied with the words of the Bible, and does not like to inquire too minutely into the mysteries of the Godhead. He confesses that God was incarnate and made man; he confesses that the manhood and the Godhead were separate before the Incarnation; he confesses that after the Incarnation the Person was One

and Divine. What then is his fault? he cannot see a subtle distinction between "Person" and "Nature;" confessing the One Personality of the Incarnate Christ, he cannot confess after the Incarnation "Two natures." The mystery of the Incarnation he cannot explain: he cannot bring himself to define the nature of the union of the Godhead and the Manhood, only he knows that His Nature is Divine, and thinks it safer to speak of one Nature, one Person—not one Person and two Natures—and for this, as he pathetically puts it, he is "thrust out of the number of the orthodox at the close of his days." Surely here is an instance of exaggerated and impertinent accuracy of definition; surely the Church could have been contented with his general confession that God was Incarnate in Christ Jesus—that Christ Jesus was God.

So it is easy to argue; and if the Church had had to do only with an individual, very possibly this argument might be sound; but it is the Church's duty to look beyond the individual to the remoter consequences of his teaching, and if we look at the matter from this point of view, we shall see how necessary it was to guard the proportion of faith, and how fatal it would have been if Eutyches' one-sided exaggeration of orthodoxy had been allowed to pass unnoticed.

From the very first, the belief in Christ involved a belief in His humanity and His Divinity. "Whom say ye," Christ had asked, "that I, the Son of Man, am?"

“Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” This confession by St. Peter of Christ’s Divine Nature was the starting-point of the Christian Church : this co-ordinate belief in the Son of Man who was also the Son of God, is the primary law of Christian Faith. But as faith is rather trust in a Person than assent to a proposition, it took a little while before this moral quality of trustful faith came to express itself clearly in propositions or in a theory of the Person of Christ, it being mainly the rise of successive false opinions, which compelled it to pass into logical expression. The instinct of Christianity dates before its logic, and the believing ear was shocked when it heard from Arius, for example, that Christ was in any sense not absolutely God. Such a statement, so antagonistic to all its feelings, instincts, and devotion, excited an irrepressible indignation in the Christian heart. Not fully God !—Then, by an inevitable inference not fully, absolutely in His own right Sovereign, not able to claim full adoring worship. But that this He was, this He could claim, the whole Christian life involved as its secret, its clue, its inspiration. It followed then He was in all and every sense God ; and the Church looked about for an expression most certain to secure this truth, and decreed Him “of one substance with the Father.”

The expression was not in Scripture, it had not been insisted on before, nay it had even been rejected as a doubtful expression when other questions were at

issue, but now this seemed to be the one expression which alone could make it quite certain that no man could be an orthodox Christian without understanding the full measure of the dignity of the Lord. Thus, in the necessity of opposing a false opinion that threatened to cut away the roots of her life and worship, the Christian Church was driven to express her right instinct in a true logical formula ; her feeling became a dogma, and if it had shrunk from this necessity, the feeling itself could not have lived long unimpaired. If the Church had refused to anathematize error she would have lost or impaired her heritage of life and devotion ; but conscious now of what she condemned, she gained at the same time a more intelligent consciousness of what she believed. We pass over a century. Another danger threatened the Church. Nestorius denied that the Babe on Mary's knees was God. The new error necessitated a new dogma. The Christian knew that in worshipping Christ, God and Man, he was worshipping not two Persons but one, and that one the Eternal Son who had been born of Mary. He, then, who denied that Mary's child was God, denied either that it was indeed God who had taken flesh, or that it was indeed flesh that He had taken. Christ was one Person, and that Person Divine. For this truth Eutyches had fought—Christ is One ; He is Divine : but having but one idea, and that to oppose Nestorianism, he lost in his assertion of the unity and Divinity of Christ's Person all sense of the

counter-truth which alone gives reality to the Incarnation, the truth of His humanity.

Eutyches never formulated a heresy, he was no philosopher; but he refused to say that the human nature remained in Christ after the Incarnation. He shrank from calling Christ "of one substance" with us men: in some sort of way he left us to suppose that the human nature was absorbed into and lost in the Divinity. Well, if the Church's instinct had been right when she refused at Nestorius's bidding to separate into two Persons the God-Man Christ, it was at least as sound now when it condemned in Eutyches the merging or annihilation of the human nature. The whole doctrine of our salvation depends on Christ being of one substance with us. He did not merely touch our nature as from the outside, and by touching transmute it into something else: He took it in all its parts, body, soul and spirit, with all its feelings, wants, instinct, powers, temptations, weaknesses—sin only excepted—He took it all, He *is* it, and He is it for ever. The whole doctrine of the second Adam centres in this. No assuming of the appearance of man, of the clothing of mere human flesh, will avail anything: Christ is the second Adam, the new man, the first parent of a restored human nature. The whole value of the Atoning Sacrifice depends on this, that it was Man who offered himself in that human nature, that in us had sinned: the whole meaning of the Ascension is lost if it is not our human nature which is exalted

to God's right hand. All this the Church felt, and asked no more.

To grieve over the error of the old opponent of heresy, this was natural ; but to hesitate to condemn him would have been a failure of charity, not to him, but to mankind who was to come after him ; it did not matter that the Bible did not speak of two natures in one Person : the Bible in every page of the New Testament assumes the real humanity of Christ, our Brother as well as our Lord ; and, as for expressions to convey the truth, that was the best which was most clear, most positive, most unmistakable—Two Natures in One Person. We may say that this was the last of the important heresies on the doctrine of the Incarnation which the Church had to deal with. The Church had now secured the truth of the Supreme Divinity as well as the Real Humanity of Christ : she had proclaimed that the Divinity and the Humanity were united in the one Divine Person who was born, and died, and rose again : and she had confessed that in that one Divine Person remained for ever unconfused, though united, the Divine and Human Natures. Nothing more could be wanted for the full doctrine of the Incarnation ; and if a later heresy could rise to deny that Christ had a Human *will*, such a doctrine had already been condemned by anticipation in the condemnation of Eutyches.

Perhaps these considerations may put us in a better position to appreciate the necessity for such dogmatic

definitions of the Church as are given us in the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds and the decrees of Councils. What was the Church's task? To preserve and hand down the truth through ages, very different in character and circumstances : through the darkness of the Middle Ages, when learning seemed dead, when religion itself sometimes seemed lost in the confusion and bloodshed all around ; through all the mental convulsion and strife of tongues of such a period as the Reformation ; through all the ecclesiastical deadness and spiritual sloth of such a period as the last century in England. Surely it was necessary then that, to live through ages so different one and unchanged, the truth must not be left to the shifting sands of feeling, but must be enshrined in some sharp, clear-cut, uncompromising, dogmatic formula, which admitted of no equivocation, which was before all things unhesitating and clear-voiced. So only would no spiritual sloth be able to impair or obliterate it, no intellectual strife disintegrate, no unintelligent brutality forget it : so only would it stand an unshaken column amid the tossing waves, and ring on one clear dominant note amid howling winds and confused echoes, and shine as one bright light amid dense and blinding mists.

It was said by Plato to be the mark of a philosopher that he deals, not with persons, but with principles. Accused as the great controversial churchmen so constantly are, and not always perhaps unjustly, of personal rancour, it may seem almost paradoxical to

say that in this respect the opponents of Eutyches exhibited a thoroughly philosophical character and spirit,—but the truth is so. It is sometimes complained that they are at small pains to inform us of the exact nature of the opinions of Eutyches, and in their sentence of condemnation accuse him almost at random of “following without alteration the blasphemies of Apollinaris and Valentinus;” whereas Eutyches himself anathematized Manes, Valentinus and Apollinaris in the Ephesine Council. The truth is, Flavian and the other bishops were at particular pains to assure themselves by personal examination that Eutyches *did* deny the permanence of the Two Natures in the Person of Christ, and that no persuasions would induce him to forsake his error : this done, their business was no further with the *man*, but with the *principle* which he represented : it is this which accounts for the apparently vague way in which they lump together opinions of very different origin. Valentinus was an Alexandrian Gnostic of the second century, who, in the spirit of a philosophy utterly alien to the mind of the dull old monk Eutyches, having for a fundamental principle a belief in matter as evil could not conceive of any real union of God with it ; and among other, to us hardly realizable opinions—such as the distinction between a “spiritual” and a “natural” Christ—was found to deny the material reality of the body of the Saviour. Nobody could be in intellect or spirit less like the obstinate and ignorant monk than the subtle and refining Gnostic, but in this

one result they agreed—they emptied our salvation of its reality by denying the full humanity of Christ—and thus, for the purposes of the council, dealing not with persons, but with a principle of denial, they come under the same head. Apollinaris, again, was a man more like Eutyches indeed in opinions and fortunes than Valentinus, but still very wide apart from him. Like Eutyches, he had been a champion of the Divinity of Christ (at the time of the Arian heresy); like Eutyches, he fell into his error through misguided zeal for the unity and Divinity of Christ. Christ, he said, was not perfectly human: he had human flesh and a human soul, but the human *spirit* was in Him replaced by the Divine Word. Now there is no probability that Eutyches had much theory or philosophy at all of Christ's person peculiar to himself, certainly he did not hold the philosophy of Apollinaris; but in this they were one—they both denied the real full human nature of the Incarnate Christ; and for this, and for this only, did general councils deal with them. It is necessary to keep this in mind when we find Eutyches called a Valentinian, a disciple of Apollinaris, even a "follower of the Manichæan impiety," by the council and by Leo: they are not dealing unfairly with him, for it is not with *him*, as an individual or his opinions, if he had any, they are dealing at all. He becomes a name, an abstraction, a counter, representing not a system but a result, a result which demanded the same treatment whether it proceeded from an Oriental

theosophy, an imprudent theology, or an obstinate fanaticism.

Having this in view, and bearing in mind the immense theological and practical importance of the Eutychian controversy, we shall be in a position to appreciate the arguments which Leo directed against the heresy. We will give them in his own words, and at a length something adequate to the importance of the subject, gathering them from his celebrated "Tome," supplemented by subsequent letters.

He begins by insisting that this, like other heresies, is due to ignorance of Holy Scripture. "When men are hindered by any obscurity in recognising the truth, they go for aid, not to the voices of prophets, or the letters of apostles, or the authority of evangelists, but to themselves ; and they become the masters of error through not having been the disciples of truth : " they will not "labour in the broad field of Holy Scripture." This, said he, "proceeds at starting to enunciate the truth as contained wholly in the very elements of the Creed as then recited at Rome : 'I believe in God, the Father Almighty, and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Holy Ghost and the Virgin Mary : ' in these three clauses almost all the machinations of the heretics are destroyed. For when God is believed omnipotent and Father, the Son is shown to be co-eternal with Him, in nothing differing from the Father, for He is of God, God ; of omnipotent, omnipotent ; of

co-eternal, co-eternal by generation—not later in time, not inferior in power, not dissimilar in glory, not divided in essence : but this Eternal, only-begotten of the Eternal Father, was born of the Holy Ghost and Virgin Mary, which birth, in time, diminished nothing from the other birth Divine and Eternal, added nothing to it, but bent its whole power to repairing that human nature which had been deceived ; that by its virtue it might both destroy death and him who had the power of death.”

Passing from this statement to Scriptural proof, Leo goes on to emphasize, as against Eutyches, the abiding reality of both the natures, Divine and human, in the Person of Christ. “The properties of each nature and substance remaining intact and combining in one Person, humility was taken by Majesty, weakness by Power, mortality by Eternity ; and to pay the debt of our fallen state, the inviolable Nature was united to the passible. So, as was needed for our healing, the one and same Mediator between God and Man, the Man Jesus Christ, both could die in one element of Himself, and could not die in the other. In the inviolate and perfect nature of very man was born very God, complete in what is His, complete in what is ours—complete in what is ours, that is, as God made us, not in what the deceiver introduced and man admitted into our nature. He took the form of a slave without spot of sin, raising humanity without detracting from Deity, for that self-emptying, by which the invisible

made himself visible and the Creator a mortal, was the condescension of pity, not the failure of power. Each nature retains its own properties without defect."

Thus, throughout the life of Christ we can discern the distinct operations of the two natures. "As God is not changed by condescension, so humanity is not annihilated by exaltation. Each, in union one with the other, does what is proper to its own nature—the Word performing what belongs to the Word, the Flesh carrying out what belongs to the flesh. The one is brilliant with miracles, the other stoops under injuries: the birth of the flesh shows the human nature—the birth of a virgin proves the Divine power; the infancy of the Little One is shown in the humble cradle, the greatness of the Most High is declared in the voice of Angels—His life begins like the life of men, whom Herod sought to slay, but He is Lord of all, whom the Magi adored; and when He came to be baptized by John, the hidden Divinity is revealed by the Voice from heaven. As man, He is tempted of Satan; as God, He is ministered to by the Angels. To hunger, to thirst, to be weary, to sleep—this is evidently of the man; but to feed the five thousand with the five loaves, to give the Samaritan woman the living water, to walk upon the sea, to subdue the tossing waves—this, without controversy, is of the God. To omit many examples, it belongs not to the same nature to lament with pitiful feeling the dead friend, and removing the stone which had hid him four days in the grave, to wake him to life again at

the command of His voice—or to hang upon the Cross, and to make all the elements tremble, turning day into night—or to be pierced with nails and to open the gates of Paradise—or to say, ‘I and the Father are one,’ and ‘the Father is greater than I.’”

And yet united as these two distinct natures are in the unity of the Person, the acts of the one are at times assigned to the other. Thus, “the *Son of Man* is read in Scripture to have come *down from Heaven*, when the Son of God took flesh : again, the *Son of God* is said to have been *crucified and buried*, though it was not in His divinity (by which the only-begotten is of one substance with the Father), but in the weakness of man’s nature that Christ suffered. In the same way in the Creed we say the Son of God was crucified and buried, as the Apostle says, ‘they would not have *crucified the Lord of Glory*.’ In all such expressions it is necessary to bear in mind that each nature remains unconfused, and the purpose of our Lord’s work after the Resurrection was nothing else than to manifest the permanent reality of His Human nature.”

But if Leo in condemnation of Eutyches emphasizes the reality of the Two Natures, no less does he insist, as against Nestorius, on the unity of Personality in Christ, and that Personality Divine. “He, the same Christ, is begotten eternally of the Father and born in time of His Mother, inviolable in His own Divine strength, and subject to suffering in our

weakness—the same, rich while He is poor, omnipotent while He is outcast, impassible while He is suffering, immortal while He dies : nor was the Word in any part of Himself *converted into flesh or soul*, for the nature of God is simple and unchangeable, remaining entire in His own essence, admitting neither of diminution nor increase : in such manner then did the Deity assume and beatify the human nature, that in receiving glory it (the humanity) remained intact in that nature which was to glorify it. Why should it seem improbable or impossible that the Word and the flesh and the spirit should form one Jesus Christ, and the same should be Son of God and Son of Man, when the flesh and spirit which are of natures so unlike, apart from any incarnation of the Word, make up one person in man? The Word was not therefore converted into flesh, or the flesh into the Word, but each Nature remains in the one Person, and the One in each Nature, not sundered by their distinction, nor confused by mixture—not one Christ from the Father, another of the Mother—but one and the same, begotten eternally in one way and born in time in another.”

So he states the true doctrine ; and from this point of view he presses Eutyches with the results of his false teaching, without, as we have said, any very exact attempt to determine the precise position which Eutyches held, if indeed he held any, beyond denial of the Two Natures. He presents him with a dilemma. Either Eutyches must deny the spiritual part of

human nature to Christ (like Apollinaris)—in which case the soul of Christ being only Divine, the Deity suffered; or he must deny Him the bodily part, in which case he falls into the “Manichæan madness,” asserting all the bodily action of Christ’s life to have been mere appearances. If by any means he can evade the dilemma there is a further difficulty: he becomes an Arian (against his will and despite the whole tendency of his life and teaching). For Christ is said to have been exalted, rewarded, &c. : in what was He rewarded? In His Divine Nature? Then must He have been inferior to the Father. In His Human Nature? Then that must have remained in Him to be exalted and rewarded.

Argument is also brought to bear on Eutyches from the subject of the Eucharist: is he “ignorant of what is so familiar in every mouth in the Church of God that not even children’s tongues are silent about the reality of the Body and Blood of Christ in the Sacraments of Communion? This is what is given, This is what is taken in that mystical distribution of spiritual sustenance, so that receiving the power of the heavenly food we are transubstantiated into (pass into) His flesh who was made our flesh.”

Above all, he presses Eutyches with the practical result of his doctrine: if you deny the reality of Christ’s humanity you deny the reality of our salvation. “What reconciliation can be made by which God can be propitiated in regard to mankind, unless One Mediator between God and man undertake the

cause of all? But how could one be a real mediator unless equal to the Father in the form of God, He share in our nature too in the form of a servant, so that through one new man, the old should be renewed, and the bond contracted by the fall of one should be loosed by the death of One who alone owed nothing to death? For the shedding of the Blood of the Just for the unjust was so powerful in privilege, so rich in value, that if all the captives should believe in their Redeemer, the chains of the tyrant could keep none of them back. Now what hope can they have in the protection of this Sacrament¹ who deny the reality of human nature in the Body of our Saviour? By what sacrifice are they reconciled, by what blood redeemed?" "Let not then any Christian think he need blush to own the reality of our body in Christ: all the Apostles and disciples of Apostles and the illustrious doctors of the Church whose merits brought them to the crown of the martyr or the glory of the confessor, shone in the light of this faith, joining in one common note of confession that in our Lord Jesus Christ is to be recognised one Personalty of the Deity and the flesh." Thus then he sums up to the clergy of Constantinople the doctrine of the Church on the Person of Christ in refutation of all

¹ It will have been noticed that Leo uses the expression "sacraments of communion" above; here he speaks of the *sacrament of atonement*. Any outward act which has a mystical and religious value would in his language be called a *sacrament*.

the heresies :—" We call Christ not God only, like the Manichæans, or man only, like the Photinians, nor man in such a sense as that there should be anything wanting to Him which certainly belongs to man's nature, whether soul or rational mind or flesh (which, they say, was not taken of a woman but was produced by the transmutation and conversion of the Word into flesh), which three falsities have produced three sects of the Apollinarians ; nor do we say that the blessed Virgin Mary conceived a man without deity, who created by the Holy Spirit, was afterwards taken by the Word upon Himself—for preaching which we publicly condemned Nestorius ; but we say that Christ, the Son of God, very God, was begotten of God the Father without any beginning of time, and that same Christ, very man, was born of a human mother, in the fulness of time ; and that His humanity, in which He is inferior to the Father, diminishes nought from His nature by which He is equal with the Father. But the one Christ is both these, as He most truly said, 'I and My Father are one,' according to His Divinity, and 'My Father is greater than I,' according to His Humanity. This faith, which alone makes true Christians, do ye hold with perseverance, and assert with constancy."

We have now said enough of the position and methods of Leo in combating the errors of Eutyches. His "Tome" is justly one of the most celebrated of pontifical decrees. A legend, professing to rest on the authority of St. Gregory, declares that it was cor-

rected by St. Peter with his own hand; in it the Fathers of Chalcedon confessed that Peter spake by Leo, and a council held at Rome under Gelasius pronounced an anathema on the man who disputes but one iota of it.

In it, with his other dogmatic epistles, in broad clear lines did the master pen of Leo lay down for the Church the Doctrine of the Incarnation, with a consummate regard for the equal reality of the Divine and human natures in this One Person of Christ, the Word. It is our duty now to follow the varying fortunes of the contest between the Church and the partizans of Eutyches, till under the generalship of Leo, the Church at last, after hard fighting and many reverses, came out victorious.

CHAPTER V.

THE FOURTH GENERAL COUNCIL.

THE records of the Councils and the frequent letters of Leo give us a tolerably complete and satisfactory picture of the Eutychian controversy and the chief actors in it. There was Eutyches himself, of whom, with his opponent, the noble-minded and gentle Archbishop Flavian, and the relentless Bishop of Dorylæum we have heard something already. There is the feeble Emperor Theodosius, whom Leo is constantly trying to bring over to the orthodox side by repeated appeals, always most respectful, and couched in the somewhat fulsome language of courts, but never succeeds in detaching from the interest of Eutyches. This attachment to Eutyches seems to have been due, not to any strength of will in the emperor himself, but to the influence of the eunuch Chrysaphius, the rival at court of the emperor's sister, the orthodox Pulcheria, and the godson and partizan of the heretic. Foiled in his design of obtaining the see of Constantinople for his godfather by the election of Flavian, he had been from the first the enemy of the archbishop: subsequent events had confirmed his animosity, and he was, no doubt, heartily glad of any opportunity of opposing Flavian and

forwarding Eutyches. As for the emperor, he was a blameless and devout nonentity, whose chief accomplishment, that of copying and decorating religious books, earned him the surname of Calligraphes, the fair writer. He was now in the forty-eighth year of his age; and during the forty-one years of his inglorious, but mainly peaceful reign, the predominant influence on his life had been that of his sister, Pulcheria. She was throughout on the side of the orthodox faith, and she was a woman on whose support any cause might justifiably congratulate itself. To great abilities, and something of the spirit and capacity for government of her grandfather, Theodosius the Great, she united a piety which led her in her youth to dedicate herself, with her two sisters, to a perpetual virginity; all through her life she combined in a remarkable degree the administrative duties of an empress with the devotion of a recluse, and numberless churches in all the provinces of the East owed their foundation to her. To her Leo ascribes a main share in the suppression of Nestorianism, and she laboured equally hard against the heresy of Eutyches; but though she had controlled throughout the education of her brother, she was able no more than Leo to counteract in this respect the influence of Chrysaphius. With these authorities in Church and State Leo is in constant correspondence; he is constantly writing to excite or keep alive in their minds a righteous and orthodox zeal; we have frequent letters also to

Faustus and other archimandrites of Constantinople, who were Eutyches' opponents; and to Julian, bishop of Cos, who acted later as Leo's deputy at the court of Constantinople. The circumstances of the controversy will introduce us to the other most important actors in it.

From the first the Emperor Theodosius had declared his intention of assembling a council; this was apparently done at the instance of Eutyches, supported by the eunuch; and not only was there this circumstance to awaken the suspicions of the orthodox, but also the fact that the professed object of the council was the suppression of Nestorianism, nothing being said of the counter-heresy. Such are the evil omens with which the second Council of Ephesus is introduced to our notice. Leo hardly ventures directly to oppose the emperor's wishes. He praises his zeal for religion, but hints, under cover of this commendation, that in a matter which admits of no possibility of doubt there can be no need of a council; he complains, too, that too short a time is allowed for preparation. Theodosius had requested that he would be present himself, but the needs of the city and the precedents of his see alike prohibit such a step. He sends to represent him three legates "a latere," accompanied by a notary, Julius, bishop of Puteoli; Juratus, a presbyter, who died upon the road; and Hilary, the deacon, afterwards pope. They left some time before the 23rd of June 449, anticipating no good from a council assembled

under such auspices, and Leo was left to await the result in a state of anxiety which could ill-brook delay, and which expresses itself in constant letters. He lived in this suspense till the beginning of October, when news brought by the fugitive Hilary more than confirmed his worst fears; but we must return to accompany the legate to Ephesus.

The council met on the 8th of August, 449, in the Church of the Blessed Virgin, at Ephesus, that same church which eighteen years before had been the scene of the condemnation and deposition of Nestorius. All the circumstances under which the council assembled were inauspicious to St. Flavian and the orthodox. Dioscorus, the patriarch of Alexandria, an already declared partizan of Eutyches, was appointed by Imperial order to preside. The representative of Rome sat next, and Flavian was degraded to the fifth place. The other members of the council which had condemned Eutyches were excluded, and the bishops numbered altogether about 130. The proceedings of the assembly soon degenerated into uproar and disorder. The Imperial soldiery, and still more the crowd of violent monks whom the abbot Barsabas had brought with him, and who had no idea except that the authority of their great patron St. Cyril was being endangered, exercised a terrorism over the council from outside, and even broke into and interrupted the proceedings. Dioscorus managed to prevent Leo's letter from being read at all, and while Eutyches was introduced into the council to plead his own cause,

his accuser Eusebius was not admitted. The records of the Council of Constantinople were read, and the sympathies of the majority were soon evident. They could not tolerate without interruption the expression, "Two natures after the Incarnation." When Eusebius's demand that Eutyches should confess the two natures was recited the assembly burst out, "Take and burn him! Let him burn alive! Let him be cut in two! As he divided,¹ let him be divided! Anathema to the man who holds two natures!" The tumult was tremendous. "I want your voices and hands too," cried the president; "but if any one cannot shout let him hold up his hand." Eutyches was now formally declared orthodox and reinstated in his ecclesiastical position, and Dioscorus proceeded to pronounce the deposition of Flavian and Eusebius; when he was silent Flavian exclaimed, "I appeal from you." Hilary, who throughout had been the active representative of Rome, uttered but one word: "Contradicitur." All the rest of the bishops who had assented, from whatever motives of belief, fear, or ignorance, to the acquittal of Eutyches, assented also to the condemnation of St. Flavian and Eusebius, in the midst of a scene of ever-increasing tumult, and under various degrees of compulsion. Many afterwards reversed their verdict. Indeed, the complaints made by some of them in the Council of Chalcedon of the treat-

¹ *i. e.* The two natures.

ment they had received, are not wanting in humorous touches ; as when Stephen, the bishop of Ephesus, asserts that his notaries' records were rubbed out, and their fingers nearly broken by Dioscorus' notaries, who wanted to take away their ink-bottles and so prevent their taking further notes. Several complained that they had been made to subscribe blank parchments, and had only been driven to such an ignominious course by much hard treatment and by being kept shut up all day in the church till evening. The terrified bishop of Smyrna said he had signed "what they gave him." In the midst of all the confusion Hilary escaped to Rome. St. Flavian was not so fortunate, and almost his last act was to lodge an appeal from the council to the pope and the western bishops. Loaded with insults, and perhaps with actual blows by Dioscorus, pressed upon and trampled underfoot by furious monks with Barsabas at their head, who stood over him and cried, "Murder him !" he escaped, only to be cast into prison, then exiled, and die of his injuries within a few days at a village in Lydia. So ended a council, œcumenical in intention, almost unanimous in its verdict, but wanting altogether in that which alone can give a council authority, the acceptance of the Church.

When the courageous deacon, who alone had boldly supported St. Flavian,¹ reached Rome "by

¹ Of the conduct of Julius, the other legate, we know nothing. Leo speaks in general commendation of the conduct of his legates.

unknown and untraversed ways," and brought to the pope the news that Dioscorus had packed and managed the council, that his own letter had been treated with contumely, that Eutyches had been reinstated and St. Flavian and Eusebius condemned—(even though he had escaped before he could know that all this course of impiety had culminated in the murder of St. Flavian)—the state of mind of his master may be imagined. His indignation fairly boils over. He calls the action of the council "a crime so monstrous that it exceeds all other sacrileges." He brands it with the name of the "Latrocinium," by which it has been known in history. "It was a den of robbers, not a council;"—all its acts are null and void. Thus he protests, but in indignation, not in fear. The half-anticipated result only stirs his energies. He was surrounded, when he received the news, by a council of more than provincial representation, convened apparently in view of the present crisis of the Church. In his own name and in the name of the council Leo proceeds to bring his influence to bear in all possible directions by frequent letters. He writes to St. Flavian, of whose death he did not yet know, in indignation and sympathy; to the archimandrites and Church of Constantinople at large, urging them to be loyal to their faith and their archbishop, and warning them that while he lives no other bishop of his see can have the communion of Rome. There are letters, too, to Julian of Cos, and Anastasius of Thessalonica,

striking the same notes of exhortation and confidence. Meanwhile, all possible pressure is being brought by him to bear on the emperor of the East to induce him to summon a larger and more œcumenical synod, and to summon it in *Italy*. The justification for this petition is found in the opposition offered by his legate to the decision of Ephesus and in Flavian's appeal to Rome, and, till it can be granted, Leo implores the emperor, by all that is most sacred, to consider as null and void all that has hitherto been done, and let the question remain as it was before the first decision of Constantinople. In furtherance of these objects he does not trust merely to his own influence with the emperor. The zeal of the orthodox at Constantinople is inspired to demand a "plenary synod:" all Pulcheria's piety and authority is set to work with the same object; and taking advantage of the presence of Valentinian at Rome, with his mother Placidia, and his wife Eudoxia, the daughter of Theodosius, he brings all their influence as well to bear on the Eastern emperor. We have a letter from Placidia to Pulcheria, which describes how the pope, when solemnly asking their intercession with Theodosius, could hardly speak for tears.

About July, 450, Leo sends some legates to explain his views on the crisis and press his wishes. He seems still full of confidence in the cause of the Church, but it was a confidence due to the conviction of his own heart, not to any external circum-

stances. In them, indeed, he could find no ground for anything but alarm. Dioscorus' influence was predominant all over the East, and he had even carried his audacity so far as to excommunicate Leo, in the spring of the year 450, and get ten bishops who were with him at Nicæa to sign the excommunication. The emperor, no doubt under the influence of Chrysaphius, was completely on his side. To the appeals of Leo and of the Imperial family of the West he had written replies, in which he professed his unshaken orthodoxy, and his complete satisfaction with the Ephesine council. He had even issued an Imperial edict confirming its acts, branding Eusebius and Flavian with the name of Nestorians, and proscribing under civil penalties Nestorian worship, the consecration of Nestorian prelates, and the reading of Nestorian books, classing under this head the works of Theodoret. All this was against Leo ; and he had, besides, a cause of anxiety in the successor of St. Flavian. Anatolius, the new archbishop, had been Dioscorus' representative at the court of Constantinople. His election was presumably due to that bishop's influence with the emperor. What antecedents could be worse than these in Leo's eyes? What security had he for his orthodoxy? More than this : Anatolius had offended him by writing simply to announce his consecration without asking any consent to it on Leo's part. All this Leo does not, of course, pass over. He writes to the emperor demanding somewhat peremptorily, though still with the utmost

respect, that the archbishop should read the writings of Catholic Fathers on the Incarnation, the famous letter of St. Cyril against Nestorius, and the acts of the orthodox Council of Ephesus. "Let him not scorn, moreover," he adds, "to read again my letter (*i.e.* 'The Tome'), which he will find to agree in all respects with the pious sentiments of the Fathers." This done, he demands that he should make a public profession of faith to be transmitted to the Apostolic see, and to all bishops and Churches of the world. With a view of supporting this demand, he sends the legates to whom allusion has been made above.

Leo was thus acting constantly and boldly ; but with the emperor against him, Dioscorus triumphant, and a doubtful man on the throne of St. Flavian, what prospect could be blacker than his ? Before, however, the legates could arrive at Constantinople, a single event had changed the whole aspect of affairs.

On July 28th, 450, the fiftieth year of his life, and the forty-third of his nominal reign, Theodosius died, in consequence of a fall from his horse. The political events of the last years of his reign had been most dishonourable to the Empire and to himself : the base policy of Chrysaphius had subjected him to the contemptuous rebukes of Attila, and he was obliged to buy off the demand of the king of the Huns for the eunuch's head by an enormous bribe. Such was the inglorious end of a nominal reign. He was succeeded by his far greater sister Pulcheria, in whose

person for the first time the Empire submitted to be governed by a woman. The accession to supreme power of one so vigorous in character and so orthodox in religion cannot but have been hailed with delight by the opponents of Eutyches. Almost the first act of her reign, the execution of Chrysaphius, delivered them from an unscrupulous enemy, and the speedy accession of Marcian, as husband of Pulcheria, to a share in the Imperial power gave the Church a valuable friend.

Educated in the profession of arms, Marcian was a brave and able soldier, "who loved peace, but was not afraid of war ;" he was also a wise administrator and an orthodox prince. He set himself at once to carry out Leo's wish for a fresh council, and though Leo had to submit to its being held in the East, he was in other respects thoroughly satisfied. The prospect of orthodoxy had suddenly brightened. Anatolius in the interval had willingly signed "the Tome" against Eutyches, and it was being circulated for signature all over the world : all the bishops who by the influence of Dioscorus and Chrysaphius had been banished for adherence to Flavian, were recalled, and their recall was followed by the exile of Eutyches, not quite far enough, however, to satisfy Leo. The body of St. Flavian himself was by the direction of Marcian brought to Constantinople, and buried with becoming dignity in the Church of the Apostles. Nor was it only at court that orthodoxy was triumphant. All the bishops whom ignorance and fear

had induced to subscribe to the condemnation of Flavian, with the return of brighter days hastened to signify their adherence to the orthodox faith represented in "The Tome." Dioscorus' hopes were gone, and Leo's influence everywhere predominant. "The light of the Catholic faith," as he writes to Julian, "is everywhere shining abroad."

But with this change in the prospects of Catholicism corresponds a remarkable change in Leo's wishes. It will be remembered that after the conclusion of the Council of Ephesus Leo had strongly urged upon the emperor to consider as null and void the acts of both councils—the one which had condemned and the one which had absolved Eutyches—and treat his position as a still open question to be tried in a fresh council. His language now is completely different. So far from the question being open, he treats it as settled once for all. The true faith is decided—Eutyches is a heretic. All that is needed now is rejection of the heretics, and caution in admitting the penitent. The bishops who had retracted are to be allowed the privileges of their own churches, they are not yet to be admitted to the communion of Rome : as for Dioscorus and his most prominent partizans, they are to be treated in their turn as heretics, and their names no longer recited at the altar. Thus he would treat the whole matter as settled already, and with the rise of this attitude towards the question has disappeared all his desire for a general council. Perhaps as he could not have

one in Italy under his own direction he did not wish to have one at all. At any rate, he writes to the emperor to beg that it may not for a moment be considered an open question "whether Eutyches' opinion was impious or Dioscorus' verdict monstrous:" he sends legates again, but only to assist Anatolius in deciding the cases of those who were seeking re-admission to the orthodox communion. As for the council, that he wishes at any rate postponed, as the time, he says, is too unquiet to admit of bishops leaving their dioceses, and he has not any interval left him to summon the Western bishops. The emperor, however, is firm, and Leo submits, though he declines now, as in the former case, to leave Rome himself, and appoints four legates to represent him at the council,—two bishops, Lucentius and Paschasinus of Lilybæum, and two presbyters, named Basil and Boniface.

These legates were armed with written instructions, and to their number was added Julian, of Cos, whose knowledge of Eastern affairs made him an important instrument for Leo's purposes.

The bishops who had been desired to assemble at Nicæa on the first of September, 451, met there to the number of 520.¹ For the convenience of the emperor they were summoned to Chalcedon, where the council opened on October 8th, in the presence of a considerable number of civil dignitaries, to represent

¹ Or, counting those who were absent, but voted by proxy through their metropolitans, 630.

the emperor, and control the proceedings.¹ Leo, who had to yield to the Imperial wishes as regards the time, the place, and to a certain extent the scope of the council (for it was no doubt assembled to *determine* the faith, as well as to proclaim it), carried his point as regards the presidency, and his legates occupied the first place. Next to them sat Anatolius, Dioscorus, Maximus of Antioch, and Juvenal of Jerusalem. The book of the Gospels was placed in the midst. At once an attack was made on Dioscorus by the Papal legates. They failed in their attempt to eject him altogether, but he was ordered out of his place to sit in the middle of the council. He was joined there by Eusebius, who had been through the winter with Leo at Rome. To a similarly ambiguous position Theodoret² of Cyrus was admitted, who was accused of Nestorianism, but had the decided support of Rome. These preliminary questions were not

¹ They may with truth be described as "the effective presidents."

² This bishop was in some ways the most eminent man of the Oriental Church of his day. He was noted for his piety, generosity, zeal in the conversion of heretics, and, more than all, as a commentator on Scripture; he was one of the most eminent with St. Chrysostom, of the literal or Antiochene school of commentators: "he abounds," says Dr. Newman, "in modes of thinking and reasoning which without any great impropriety may be called English." It cannot be denied that in his opposition to Cyril he fell short of the orthodox standard as regards the unity of the person of Christ, but though he never accepted the "Articles" of St. Cyril, he did, as we shall see, recover his orthodoxy.

decided without violent clamour and tumult from both sides, which the magistrates succeeded in reducing to something like order by a dignified reproof—"These rabble-clamours neither befit bishops nor benefit your cause!" but the outbreaks continued at very short intervals. As the records of the "Robber Council" were read, the bishops who had signed its decrees strenuously disclaimed responsibility for their acts, on the ground of the disorder of the proceedings and the violence of Dioscorus' faction. The reading of the records went on late into the evening, when a provisional sentence pronounced on those chiefly responsible for it elicited loud cries of "A just sentence! Christ has deposed Dioscorus! Christ has deposed the homicide; God has vindicated the martyrs!" mingled with shouts for the emperor and empress, and the solemn words of the Trisagion. In the Babel of tongues ended the first session of the council.

In the second session of the council "The Tome" was read and hailed with loud applause. "Thus we all believe! Peter has spoken by Leo! Leo and Cyril teach alike! eternal the memory of Cyril! This is the true faith! This is the faith of the Fathers! Why was not this read at Ephesus?" All, however, were not so easily contented. The bishops of Palestine and Illyria took exception to some passages, as carrying too far the idea of the duality of natures. Another bishop asked for time to consider it quietly, and the matter was postponed for five days.

The business of the third session was the trial of Dioscorus. The accuser was Eusebius, and petitions were presented against him from Alexandria also, accusing him of acts of persecution, avarice, and a vicious life. After being summoned several times by the council and evading the citations, he at last finally and determinately refused to come. "What I have spoken, I have spoken," he said; "I have nothing to add to it." Sentence was therefore pronounced upon him in his absence by the Roman legates, and he was condemned for receiving Eutyches after he had been regularly condemned by his bishop. "The Apostolic see," it was added, "has forgiven the acts done at Ephesus by persons acting under compulsion, and who from that time to now have been obedient to the archbishop Leo and the holy and universal synod. But Dioscorus has continued to make a boast of actions which ought to be his shame." The document summarized his crimes. He refused to read the letter of Leo at the Council of Ephesus. Far worse, he had the presumption to excommunicate him; finally, when he had stood accused of various misdemeanours, though thrice summoned, he had refused to attend. For these reasons, "Leo, archbishop of the great and elder Rome, through us and through the holy synod here present, together with the blessed apostle Peter, who is the rock and corner-stone of the Catholic Church, and the foundation-stone of the right faith, hereby strips him of the dignity of the Episcopate, and deprives him of all

sacerdotal privileges. Therefore, let this holy synod decree what is agreeable to the canons on the afore-said Dioscorus." To this Anatolius and the other bishops expressed their assent. The deposition of Dioscorus was confirmed by the emperor, and he was banished to Gangra, in Paphlagonia, where he died within a few years. The see of St. Mark was given to Proterius, the archpriest of Alexandria, whose orthodoxy was undisputed ; but the deposition of Dioscorus was the beginning, not the end, of troubles for the Egyptian Church. When a number of Egyptian bishops in the Chalcedonian synod were urged to subscribe Leo's "Tome" and condemn Eutyches, they pleaded the custom of their Church, which refused them the right to act without their archbishops ; they did not shrink from the most abject entreaties that they might not be forced to sign till a new archbishop had been appointed, and assured the council that if they did they would be murdered on their return home. These men showed a true instinct as regards the sentiment of the Egyptian Church, its loyalty to the patriarch, and its violence against his enemies. In effect, only a small proportion of the Egyptian Christians recognised Proterius, and his appointment resulted in the Jacobite schism, the adherents of which to this day recognise Dioscorus as their "teacher."

At the fourth session the question of Leo's "Tome" came up again according to arrangement, and was now finally accepted by the whole council, a personal

conference with the Roman legates having satisfied the scruples of the Illyrian bishops.

The harmony of the council was, however, imperilled in the fifth session by a definition of faith, produced at the request of the magistrates, which failed to satisfy the Roman legates. They accused it of ambiguity as regards the two natures, and threatened, if it was carried, to leave the council and have a synod held in Italy. At the suggestion of the magistrates, however, a commission was appointed to revise the definition, and it finally met the approval of all in a form which seemed to exclude all possible errors and guard equally the unity of the Person, and the duality of the Natures. In the next session Marcian and Pulcheria attended in state, and the synod listened to an address from the emperor, in which he declared himself to have come not "to exercise power, but to confirm the faith." At the conclusion he and the empress were hailed with acclamations of delight, and he was styled a "second Constantine."

Thus was the Church's faith in the Incarnation finally settled, and settled entirely to Leo's satisfaction. The first three out of the four sections which compose the synodal letter addressed by the council to the pope must have been read by him with an unclouded brow—nothing could have been more complimentary to himself and to his see. But the fourth section treats of a canon—the famous 28th—decreed by the council, against which Leo's legates had protested, and protested in vain, and which stirs

his deepest indignation—that, namely, which concerns the position and dignity of the see of Constantinople in Christendom : but before dealing with this matter we must take a retrospective view of the position in the Church which the see of Rome occupied at the date of Leo's papacy in theory and in practice.

CHAPTER VI.

LEO THE POPE.

As we are not writing a history of the Papacy, but the life of a particular pope, we cannot perhaps do better than begin the subject by stating, in his own language, what he conceived to be the position and office of his see in the Church as a whole. When we have done this we shall be able to ask ourselves the further question, What are the meaning and justification of this conception, and how did it arise? and to examine whether the theory is shown by the facts of history to have been put in practice in Leo's own case, or to have remained a theory, a hope, a prophecy, to which future years only could give substance and reality.

For stating Leo's theory of the papal power we have considerable materials. A provincial council used to assemble annually at Rome on Leo's "birthday," that day, that is, on which he was consecrated to the episcopate, and it was his custom on that occasion to preach a sermon before the assembled bishops on the dignity and authority of the see of St. Peter.

His heart rejoices, he tells them, as he sees "so

distinguished a crowd of his brother bishops," and feels their presence is only a visible sign of their hearts' devotion to his see ; he realizes the presence of the angels amongst them, the ampler grace of the divine co-operation which cannot but be vouchsafed to a meeting of so many, so wholly one in purpose and faith ; but, above all, his heart seems to glow at such a moment with the consciousness of the continual, one might almost say mystical, presence of St. Peter, with and in his successors. This is a thought he is constantly repeating ; he himself is but Peter's representative,—“the love of the whole Church recognises Peter himself in his see,” and “Peter's care still rules in all parts of the Church.” What Peter was then, that his representative is ; and Peter was the first of the Apostles, the Rock, the one whose especial commission it was “to strengthen his brethren,” to “feed Christ's sheep.” More than this, not only had he the primacy, but also *he is the channel* through which is given whatever graces the other Apostles have ; “Christ willed that His sacred gift (the spreading of the Gospel) should belong to the office of all the Apostles, only so far as is consistent with His having endowed the blessed Peter, chief of all the Apostles, with it in a supreme manner, and His having willed that *from him as from a head His gifts should flow out into the whole body*, so that he should know that he has no share in the divine mystery who has dared to retire from the solid foundation of Peter.” St. Peter has thus no mere primacy of authority and jurisdic-

tion, but a *mediatorial position*, and it is but a natural and less important consequence that he who is one with Christ in His mediatorial office should share His regal power; that "though there are many bishops and pastors, yet Peter should govern them all by his peculiar office, whom Christ governs by his supreme authority. Thus great and wonderful," so Leo sums up the matter, "is the share in its own power which the Divine condescension assigned to this man !" Rome, again, as the metropolis of Christendom, occupies more than her former position as head of the Empire : "They (the Apostles Peter and Paul) it is," he says, addressing the city of Rome, "who have brought thee to such a height of glory, that as a holy race, an elect people, a royal and sacerdotal state, raised to be head of the world through the holy see of the blessed Peter thou shouldst rule with a broader sway in the divine religion, than by thine earthly dominion." Indeed, her earthly sway was but the preparation for her religious authority. The Roman Empire, uniting the world, was just the divine preparation for the spread of the universal Gospel.

Here, then, we have a theory of papal functions, vague and undefined, but vast enough to justify almost any assertion of pastoral and disciplinary authority. The points in the theory which require notice are, first, that whatever Peter was among the Apostles, that the pope is among the bishops ; so that the whole Petrine privilege is inherited by Rome, —not by any other of the sees founded by St. Peter.

Secondly, that the position here claimed by the pope is not that of a patriarch, or chief among patriarchs, it is an immediate relation to the whole Church, East and West, similar to the relation of the capital to the whole Roman Empire.

Thirdly, and this is the most important point, the position asserted for Peter among the other Apostles is not merely that of a "first among equals," or even of a superior among inferiors, it is something generically different; he is a *mediator* between Christ and the other Apostles; he is the only *immediate* recipient of sacerdotal grace, and what the others receive they receive through him. Leo seems to shrink, not unnaturally, from calling Peter *the head*, from whose life the members live, but he calls him *a head*, a kind of head, from or through which alone grace is derived to the limbs. The importance of such a claim as this cannot be exaggerated; if it be admitted, the whole question is settled, and separation from Rome is separation from grace, and therefore from Christ.

Such, then, is the theory of papal authority which a great and good man like St. Leo can assert in the middle of the fifth century. When it is first presented to us, we are inclined to ask—how could Leo, a man so full of Scriptural knowledge, offer such a theory to men? Where is there a word in Scripture which even hints at St. Peter being the channel of any kind of grace to the other Apostles? What becomes of all St. Paul's vehement assertions of the independence of his apostolate? Taken at the very

most, how can such a benediction as "Thou art the Rock," or such seemingly occasional and incidental injunctions as, "Strengthen thy brethren," "Feed my sheep," be given any force which can justify such a claim? So we question, the first time we think about the matter, in blank astonishment. Is this theory, then, we are tempted to ask, a merely artificial thing? Is it the invention of this or that man, wishing to frame a foundation to support ambitious designs? Is it the conscious product of deception?

To this we may answer that probably the *theory* of the papacy is much more the result of conscious effort than the papacy itself. When the power and influence of the popes was continually growing, they and their supporters began to look about for argument to justify their position, but the position itself was in very large measure the product of circumstances. No doubt there was much of personal ambition that went to build up the fabric, no doubt much unscrupulousness may be laid to the charge of popes, and those who worked for them, in the way of misquotations and falsification of documents—and of such unscrupulousness Leo himself, as we shall see, is not wholly innocent,—but all their ambition, all their unscrupulousness, would not have availed anything if there had not been something to inspire and to give force and direction to it, and, above all, to sustain it and give it continuity—a tendency in the social order, a necessity of the ecclesiastical world which put Rome forward and kept her there. The institution of

the papacy is too great a thing, and occupies too large a place in the world, to be the product of deception, or machination, or personal ambition ; too great even to be the work of a set of men consciously planning and organizing an institution : it has all the aspect of a natural growth, a development deep-rooted in the circumstances of Church and State. If so, then there must be something providential in its growth, however much the purpose of Providence may still be found to be thwarted and misdirected by human ambition and human deception.

Up to some indefinite period in the third century the Church of Rome was, as it were, a Greek colony in the Latin city. Its language, its literature, its liturgy, its officers, all were Greek. This was the period of its obscurity, but even then a special veneration centred round the Church of St. Peter, the Church whose orthodoxy through all the early controversies was unsullied, the Church of the metropolis where, more than anywhere else in the face of the pagan and Imperial power, Christianity required to be full of faith and full of courage : even then in the domineering character of St. Victor we seem to have a foretaste and a prophecy of the popes of the future. The period of the great Eastern councils did much to foster the growing dignity of Rome. While the East was agitated by one heresy after another on the most central points of the faith, Rome stood aloof from the violence and heat of the discussion, and as the great and acknowledged patriarchate

of the West received, in her more dignified repose, constant appeals from Eastern disputants ; while, as applicants became more numerous, her support became continually of more importance for warring parties. Still, too, through all these discussions the bishops of Rome, with one partial exception, maintained with consistency the orthodox faith. And now, as the see increases in importance, the character of its occupants becomes more distinguished, and the political circumstances of the time favoured their prominence. The withdrawal of the seat of Government and the Imperial residence from Rome left all the magnificent traditions of government and authority, all the splendid *prestige* of the Eternal City to centre round the head of the bishop of Rome, whose personality as the great Western representative of Christendom became constantly more important as paganism was beaten under and died away, and as each emperor in turn was more contemptible than the last. Again, all the needs of society and of the Church demanded centralization in an age of general confusion and barbarian invasions ; and if men were looking for a centre for social organization, whither could they look but to Rome ? Long-engrained custom claimed Rome as the centre of society. Just when affairs were in this condition, when all the circumstances of Church and State were preparing the way for the Mediæval papacy, Leo was born. His earliest ecclesiastical memories must have been associated with the dignified pontificate of Innocent I, and with

his vague and large claims to jurisdiction in the West, during whose life the Pelagian controversy in Africa, producing appeals from both parties to Rome, gave the pope a magnificent opportunity of exercising authority. But if the circumstances of Leo's youth were calculated to inspire him with a deep sense of the position of the Roman see as centre of the ecclesiastical world, and of her vocation to carry on the Imperial traditions of the secular capital, they must have taught him, also, that his position was not assured in the Church, and that her decisions and demands would not by any means always meet with acceptance. Zosimus, Innocent's successor, A.D. 417, acting with less caution than Leo showed in the similar case of Eutyches' appeal, was induced by the personal address of Celestine and by the letter from his greater coadjutor Pelagius, to absolve those heretics and write in their favour to the African Church. This decision was of course rejected. He replied with an assertion of prerogative, which in its context is specially audacious, that "the tradition of the Fathers has ascribed to the Apostolic see so great an authority that no man can dare to dispute its judgment;" but he soon after perceived his mistake, condemned the heretic and issued the "Tractoria," which became the test of orthodoxy. About this period also the claim of Rome to be the supreme court of ecclesiastical appeal—a claim supported, as we shall see, by a gross misquotation—received a violent check from the African Church in the case of

the priest Apiarius, the Africans finally declaring with great emphasis, "That God has committed bishops and clergy to the judgment of their own metropolitans," but "it was not to be thought that God would inspire one individual with justice and withhold it from a multitude of bishops in council." Those circumstances under the pontificate of Zosimus, Boniface, and Celestine, must have tended to teach Leo the need of prudence as well as determination, if Rome was to carry the day. The heresy of Nestorius gave Celestine, in 451, an opportunity of presenting Rome to the Eastern World as a pillar of orthodoxy, and a denunciation of excommunication against the heretic was issued by the pope.

It was, then, at a somewhat critical moment in the history of Papal aggrandizement that Leo became bishop of Rome. Circumstances were thrusting greatness upon the see of St. Peter: the glory of the Empire was passing into her hands, the distracted Churches of Spain and Africa, harassed and torn in pieces by barbarian hordes and wearied with heresies, were in no position to assert independence in any matter, and were only too glad to look to any centre whence a measure of organization and of strength seemed to radiate; and the popes had not been slow in rising to welcome and promote the greatness with which the current and tendency of the age was investing them. Their rule seems to have been, more than anything else, to make the largest claim, and enforce as much of it as they could, but the

theory of papal power was still indeterminate, vague, unfixed. She was Patriarch of the West—what rights did that give her? What was her claim in Gaul, or Spain, or Africa? What, still more, was her position in regard to the Churches of the East? Nothing of this was settled or recognised. Was her claim, again, a claim of jurisdiction merely, or did she hold herself forth as a doctrinal authority in a sense in which other bishops were not? In this respect, again, the claim into which Leo entered was indefinite and unformulated. In Leo, as we have seen, we get something more of a definite theory of papal power, at any rate in the matter of jurisdiction; and the theory, as it appears in him, is on the high road to justify universal absolutism. Indeed the whole bent of Leo's mind tended in that direction. The Imperial instincts of old Rome are dominant in him, all that sense of discipline, order, government—all the hatred of ununiformity, individuality, eccentricity. These are the elements which make up Leo's mind. He is above all things a governor and an administrator. He has got a law of ecclesiastical discipline, a supreme canon of dogmatic truth, and these are his instruments to subdue the troubled world; before these, radiating from Rome as a centre, all must bow down; local traditions, the rights of national Churches, these are nothing if they seem for a moment to impede and thwart this universal sway. He has no notion, such as we strive in our days to grasp, of a unity consistent with and

comprising minor differences. "Truth," he says, "which is one and simple, does not admit of any variety." "The Catholic faith, which is true and one, may not be vitiated by any diversity." These are his watchwords: they must be admitted to be watchwords appropriate to his age. There was no originality of thought in the world worth respecting; the only opposition in regard to dogma that Leo came across was from the soul-destroying impurities of the then Manichæism, and the half-stupid obstinacy of Eutyches. In the matter of jurisdiction we find ourselves less in sympathy with Leo than in the matter of doctrine, and yet even here we feel that the age wanted solidarity and unity much more than freedom.

We shall defer any attempt to suggest a moral judgment on Leo's theory till we have made ourselves more acquainted with the details of his policy.

CHAPTER VII.

LEO THE POPE.

THE rule which governed Leo's conduct as pope was a very simple one, it was to take every opportunity which offered itself for asserting and enforcing the authority of his see : he was not troubled with historical or Scriptural doubts or scruples which might cast a shadow of indecision, "the pale cast of thought" on his resolutions and actions. To him the papal authority had come down as the great inheritance of his position ; it was identified in his mind with the order, the authority, the discipline, the orthodoxy which he loved so dearly ; it suited exactly his Imperial ambition, in a word, his "Roman" disposition and character, and he took it as his single great weapon against heresy and social confusion. At the very beginning of his pontificate irregularities in the Church of Aquileia were reported to him—how the watchfulness of the bishops of the province was relaxed, and how Pelagians were being allowed to slip, with errors unrenounced, into Church communion. His tone here with the bishops immediately under the shadow of his patriarchal authority was very peremptory. Having alluded to the scandal reported, he continues, in his letter to the bishop of

Aquileia, "that this daring attempt may go no further, and that the evil introduced through the negligence of some may not reach to the overthrow of many souls, we enjoin upon you, brother, by the authority of our command here given, to assemble the synod of the bishops of your province, and compel all, whether priests, deacons, or clergy of whatever degree, who have been received into Catholic communion from the company of Pelagians and Coelestians with such carelessness as not to have been first obliged to condemn their errors—to compel them, we say, now that their hypocrisy has been in part discovered, to true amendment, which may do them good and hurt no one. They must openly condemn the authors of their arrogant heresy, and express their reprobation of whatever in their doctrine the universal Church has repudiated; and in full and open terms, making subscription with their own hands, they must profess their acceptance and full approval of all the decrees of synods which have been ratified by the authority of the Apostolic see for the purpose of annihilating this heresy. No obscurity, no ambiguity, must be tolerated in their professions." This is the language, not of a resolute leader merely, but of an admitted superior to an inferior, and in this strain could Leo write to the metropolitan of the province of Venetia. In just a similar strain, in his character of metropolitan, does he write to the bishops of the home provinces of Campania, Picenum, and Tuscany. "It is

allowed," he says, "that men who had married widows, and some, too, who had had more than one wife, have been admitted to the priesthood, contrary to the words of the Apostle, 'The husband of one wife' (1 Tim. iii. 2), and the decree of the law, 'Let the priest have a virgin to wife, not a widow, nor one divorced' (Levit. xxi. 14). All men who have been admitted with these disqualifications, we order, by the authority of the Apostolic see, to be deprived of all ecclesiastical functions and of the title of priest."

In the year 444, Leo had occasion to enter into the affairs of the Church of Illyria. The relation of that Church to the See of Rome is of very great historical interest. The first "Vicar Apostolic" was Rufus, bishop of Thessalonica, appointed by Innocent I. to preside over Illyria in his name and as his representative. This appointment would be based on the pope's position as Patriarch of the West; when, therefore, Eastern Illyricum was transferred to the Eastern Empire a decree was issued by Theodosius, transferring its ecclesiastical cases to the jurisdiction of Constantinople. The decree was, of course, violently resisted by Boniface, then pope, and, in effect, by the mediation of the Western emperor Honorius, he procured its recall. But the authority of Rome in Eastern Illyricum still in Leo's day needed insisting upon, and the ground could not yet be reckoned upon as thoroughly won. Accordingly, we find Leo's language in dealing with the bishops of

Illyria a good deal less dictatorial and absolute than what we have listened to before. He appoints Anastasius, bishop of Thessalonica, his vicar Apostolic, but in doing so he condescends to give reasons to justify his action, and even adopts an apologetic tone. He begs these metropolitans of Illyria to accept the admonition which comes from the authority of the Apostolic see in the spirit of charity and kindness : he grounds his actions on his desire to resist all possible usurpations. "Do not," he says, "think it any invasion of your rights if you see me in this way taking precautionary measures against unlawful presumption"—(on whose part is not quite clear !) "Our care extends over all the Churches ; for nothing less than this is required of us by the Lord, who committed to the Apostle Peter the primacy of Apostolic dignity as a reward for his faith, grounding the universal Church on him as its foundation ; in fulfilment, then, of this obligation of solicitude which lies upon us, we would share it with those who are joined with us in a common office, and we appoint as our vicegerent, Anastasius, our brother bishop, following the example of our predecessors, whose memory we honour, and we have adjured him to be on the watch to prevent any unlawful presumption ; and we admonish you to give him obedience in matters connected with ecclesiastical discipline." The authority of the Apostolic see thus asserted seems to have been willingly accepted, and Leo is

able to organize a regular system of provincial administration, finding its centre in Rome. The confirmation of the papal vicar is required for all episcopal elections, and the metropolitans are (according to Leo's first letter) to be actually ordained by him: the latter point is, however, subsequently modified. Provincial councils, summoned by the metropolitans, are to meet every two years: when grave questions arise they are to be referred to a representative synod summoned by the vicar, and from this any difficulty still felt is to be taken up to Rome for solution. But, as if to guard against an *esprit de corps*, a national spirit which might prevail in the majority of those councils and make them jealous of Roman influence, any individual bishop who is discontented is to be allowed to appeal at once to Rome; as, in fact, Atticus, the metropolitan of Epirus Vetus, did not many years later, and secured the pope's protection against the cruelty of the pope's own vicar, Anastasius. Nothing could indicate more clearly than this ecclesiastical constitution of Illyria the ideal of papal government. The pope was to be a good deal more than a metropolitan of metropolitans.

Meanwhile, in 445, a letter from Leo's future antagonist, Dioscorus, probably announcing his election to the see of Alexandria in succession to St. Cyril, gave Leo an opportunity of asserting a somewhat visionary claim to control even that patriarchal throne. The Church of Alexandria was founded by St. Mark, as that of Rome was by St. Peter; as Peter,

then, lived on in the see of Rome, so we may conclude did St. Mark in that of Alexandria. But who was Mark? The disciple of St. Peter, ordained by him, instructed by him; such, therefore, it is insinuated, is the position of the Church of Alexandria to the Church of Rome. Such is the justification which Leo finds for giving Dioscorus detailed directions as to the celebration of mass and the days of ordination, which, however, do not seem to have in fact altered the customs of that Church. But about this time a more important controversy was occupying the pope's energies.

St. Hilary of Arles, a slightly younger contemporary of St. Leo, born¹ of a noble family, and having received the best education of the age, was already in early manhood in the great places of the State and on the high road to distinction, when the call of religion and the persuasions of his friend Honoratus led him to forsake the world and seek religious retirement in the island of Lerins. Thence he was summoned, on the elevation of Honoratus to the bishopric of Arles, to assist him in the administration; and on the death of his friend, in 429, the irresistible wish of the citizens forced him against his will to be his successor. He was a man of pure and lowly holiness, a zealous evangelist, simple and ascetic in his life, loving order and discipline, but hating oppression and fearless in rebuking it, a beautiful

¹ Born probably 401.

writer, and a most powerful preacher ; if he is to be called a semi-Pelagian, that would not seem to mean more than he could not go the length of all the Augustinian doctrine of Predestination and Grace. Altogether the fifth century does not present a nobler and a more beautiful character. Certainly the two greatest Christians of the West, in the year 444, were Leo, the pope, and Hilary of Arles ; both were equally in earnest for true religion, both were specially zealous for ecclesiastical discipline ; but similar as in all these respects their objects were, there was one point on which collision was only too possible. Hilary was inclined to exaggerate the metropolitan power of his see ; Leo was bent on subordinating the metropolitans to the pope, and Gaul was debatable ground, outside the Roman patriarchate, but not outside the growing influence of the papacy. The circumstance out of which the actual collision sprang was not important. A council, presided over by Hilary, had deposed a prelate, Celidonius, on the ground of his having, while still a layman, married a widow, and as a magistrate inflicted capital punishment—irregularities which according to the ecclesiastical discipline of the time had for their consequence deposition. Celidonius appealed to Rome. Hilary, as soon as he knew it, with characteristic energy started in the middle of winter on foot to cross the Alps and go to Rome. Arrived there he first paid his devotions at the tombs of the Apostles, and then presented himself before Leo, urging him

to keep himself within his canonical rights and not to try over again a case which did not belong to his jurisdiction. Leo, however, would not listen to him. He collected a council, and Hilary consented to take a seat in it, but his plain assertion of his rights there did not suit Roman ears, which, as a friend of Hilary's subsequently said, "are very delicate." "He said things," Leo afterwards wrote, "which no layman could utter, no bishop listen to." After protesting in vain, he left Rome, evading the guards which Leo, utterly unjustifiably, had put to watch him, and returned at once to Gaul. This proceeding, the only course consistent with the dignity of his see, Leo describes as a "disgraceful flight." Having restored Celidonius, of the rights of whose case we are not now in a position to judge, Leo proceeded to listen to other charges against Hilary, which were very probably misrepresentations, but which Leo seems very readily to have believed and made the worst of. He excluded him from his own communion, deprived him of the metropolitan power over the see of Vienne, and even suggested that a sort of primacy in Gaul should be conferred on a bishop, Leontius, on the mere score of age. Leo's conduct in this matter is the least creditable part of his life. Without a doubt he was tempted by the chance of asserting a more than doubtful right, which the appeal of Celidonius gave him. In yielding to the temptation he was led to act with almost unpardonable ferocity towards the saintly Hilary. He trusted to *ex parte*

statements about him ; he disregarded, in depriving his see of the metropolitan rights over Vienne, the settlement of his own predecessor Zosimus, which he also is driven to misrepresent, and he showed a reckless disregard of Gallic rights ; indeed, the letter of Leo to the Bishop of Vienne, in which he announces his wishes, is one of those few which we would willingly not find among his writings. Granted that Hilary exceeded his metropolitan rights, a man so holy and unselfish is not to be recklessly accused of personal ambition, at any rate by a pope. If Leo be Peter, it was indeed true that "he refused to be subject to the blessed Apostle Peter," but in this he was doing anything rather than "revolting against ancient customs ;" and the prelates of Gaul can hardly have learnt, without a smile, that Leo was instituting no novelty, but simply restoring antiquity, and protecting them from the aggressions of an unlawful ambition. Leo, in fact, seems to have been conscious that his policy needed some support independent of ecclesiastical order ; he accordingly obtained from, or we should almost imagine, dictated to the Emperor Valentinian, that rescript, parts of which were quoted above, which grounding vaguely the rights of Rome on the "authority of a holy synod" as well as the merit of St. Peter and the dignity of Rome, makes the irresponsible absolutism of the Roman pontiff part of the law of the Empire—a rescript which the great Catholic historian Tillemont describes as a law "trop favorable à la puissance du siège (de

Rome), mais peu honorable à sa piété." Hilary never seems to have acknowledged in any way his deposition; and that Leo, at his death, four years afterwards, should speak of him as a man "of holy memory," may be taken as in some sort a retraction of the charges made when he was acutely irritated by his vigorous assertions of provincial independence.

It is a question not wholly settled how far Leo's sentence was put into execution in Gaul. It was his desire, he says in a later letter, that the metropolitan dignity taken from Arles should be given to Vienne; this seems never to have been done, and Leo appears to recognise Hilary's successor Ravennius as metropolitan. On the other hand, Leo received a petition from the provincial bishops, about 450, formally asking for the restoration to Arles of its ancient position, and the tone of their petition is certainly sufficiently abject. The papacy and the Empire combined had done their work upon them. They simply put themselves in Leo's hands, and make a special point of grounding their claims on the fact, or tradition, that Trophimus was their first bishop, and Trophimus was sent by St. Peter. They even ask for a wider jurisdiction in Gaul for the bishop of Arles, as vicegerent of the pope. On the receipt of this, and a counter-petition from Vienne, Leo divided the jurisdiction of the province between the two bishops; and this decision was temporarily acquiesced in. Certainly, the result of the trouble was the extension of papal influence.

Meanwhile, about 446, Leo had an opportunity to assert long-resisted rights over the administration of the African Church. She was too weak and disorganized now under the long miseries of Vandal persecution to resist papal encroachments as she had done in the days of Celestine ; and Leo is able to assume a tone of complete authority to correct abuses, and apparently to reverse a decision of an African council in the case of a priest, Lupicinus. The similar weakness of the Churches of Spain enabled him to speak to them, too, in a tone of greater authority ; and the bishops of Sicily, over whom, of course, he had patriarchal rights, are soundly rated, desired to conform in everything to the customs of the Roman Church, "whence they receive the consecration of their office," and commanded to send three representatives to the annual Roman synod.

The history now brings us round again to the Eutychian heresy. From what we have already told it will have been sufficiently apparent that the effect of the whole controversy was the exaltation of the Roman see. It will become also apparent that this exaltation, when it passed certain due limits, represented not the tendency or the will of the whole Church, but at most one-half of it only, and that the progress of Rome's aggrandizement represented nothing else than so many steps in the direction of the great schism.

The Eutychian controversy, then, told in the direc-

tion of the aggrandizement of the Roman see. For, first of all, the centre of the whole controversy, when it passed the limits of a local Constantinopolitan struggle, was the bishop of Rome. Far the greatest living ecclesiastic, and, on the dogmatic side, the greatest theologian, he could not, had he been bishop of never so insignificant a town, have played a subordinate part. But he was bishop of Rome, and this, from our present point of view, is the significance of the Eutychian controversy. It made Rome the centre of orthodoxy, and Rome's definition the standard of faith in the last great heresy on the Incarnation. It was from Alexandria that the champion came forth against Arius ; and it was from Alexandria that the great dogmatic epistles against Nestorius went forth to be the canon of the true faith. Rome in both these capital controversies had to play a subordinate, even if a dignified part ; but now, in the last capital heresy on the Incarnation, the source of the orthodox definition is Rome and Leo ; and thus, just when Rome's claims to jurisdiction were reaching their full height and compass, when the current of circumstances was setting full and strong in the direction of her authority, Eutyches thrust into her hands the glory of being not only the centre of authority, but the source of truth ; not merely the great governor, but the safe teacher. The letter of Leo on the Incarnation is thus a corner-stone in the fabric of the later claim of infallibility : and yet that claim dates far later

than the claims of jurisdiction ; later, in fact, than Leo's time. We shall find nothing of it in him, however vast his aspirations for the aggrandizement of his see.

Secondly, we must notice that the Eutychian controversy made Rome the recipient of appeal after appeal. Eutyches, Flavian, Eusebius, Theodoret, and several others made, or were believed to have made, their appeals in turn to the see of St. Peter; and all this gave Leo the opportunity of asserting an often-resisted claim, around which much of the history of papal exaltation centres.

The Council of Sardica, in A.D. 347, representing exclusively the Western Church, had passed a canon allowing discontented bishops to appeal from provincial synods to Julius, bishop of Rome. This canon gives the right of appeal to a particular bishop of Rome, but on the ground of "honouring the memory of the blessed Peter," and might therefore reasonably be taken as applying to all successive bishops of Rome, at any rate as a precedent. Moreover, nothing is said in the canon of its applying only to the Western bishops ; but the whole council is of exclusively Western authority, and the counter-decree of Constantinople in 381, shows clearly enough that no such canon would ever have received the consent of the Eastern Church. It had in no sense œcumenical authority. But this decree was the basis of Rome's claim of an universal appellate jurisdiction, and this chiefly through the canon

of Sardica being reckoned and quoted at Rome as a decree of Nicæa. Zosimus had so quoted it to the African Church as his justification for reversing their judgment in the case of Apiarius; and this misquotation had so scandalized the Church of Africa, then still in the vigour of its life, that they had caused the authentic copies of the decrees of Nicæa at Alexandria and Constantinople to be examined, and finding that this canon was wholly absent from these, as from their own copies (and indeed practically contradicted by a real decree of the Nicene Fathers), they wrote back to Celestine, requesting him not to violate those canons to which he had appealed, denying him the right he claimed, and showing conclusively that the quotation of Nicæa he had made was utterly unjustified. However much, then, the canons of Sardica may at Rome have been regarded as an appendix to those of Nicæa, no pope after this could, without deliberate misquotation, quote the appeal-canon as having Nicene authority. He could not plead ignorance after this clear demonstration. It must therefore be admitted that Leo in urging, as he constantly did, Nicene authority for receiving appeals from the universal Church, was distinctly and consciously guilty of a *suppressio veri* at any rate, which is not distinguishable from fraud. Of this crime we cannot acquit him; and how large a part this and similar "lies"—which they are none the less, though they be believed to be "for God"—have contributed to the advancement of the Roman see, it is

quite impossible to estimate. The "custom of the Roman Church" is a strange plea to urge on Leo's behalf; it is the only one that can be urged.

It remains for us to consider a little more in detail the relation between Leo and the Eastern bishops in regard to papal authority. Except in the matter of receiving appeals, Leo's claim in the East at once strikes us as utterly indefinite. He professes his "universal care" for all the Churches: he claims to be kept alive to what is done in the East; and the power of excluding any bishop from communion with Rome gives him a sort of hold on episcopal elections, as we remember in the case of Anatolius. He cannot tolerate that they should be effected without notification to him, without his having some hand in their confirmation. But all this is a vague claim, and in regard to infallibility there is no claim made at all. We cannot help being struck with the fact that when Leo comes to write his great "Tome" on the doctrine of the Incarnation, it is in the form of a letter to Flavian, and in a tone nowise different from that adopted by St. Cyril in his epistles against Nestorius. The bishop of Ravenna, indeed—Peter Chrysologus, to whom Eutyches had written at the same time as he appealed to Rome—replies by recommending the appellant to listen to Rome, because "the blessed Peter, who lives and presides in his own see, gives the truth of the faith to those who seek it." But there is nothing of this language in Leo's own letter.

He classes it with that of St. Cyril : he expresses a wish that "Anatolius should not think his own letter (or 'The Tome') beneath his regard ;" and asserts that "he will find it to be in agreement in all respects with the piety of the Fathers." When his letter, which he circulated all over the world, was received by a council at Milan in 481, it is commended as *agreeing with the writings of St. Ambrose*. Leo himself, after Chalcedon, recommends it as confirmed by that council. He fortifies it with patristic testimonies, and even speaks of it as the "decree of the synod." "Those dogmatic definitions," he says to Theodoret, "which God had first given by our agency, He established by the irreversible consent of the whole brotherhood of bishops."

In the language of the Oriental bishops to Leo we have sometimes expressions of profoundest deference. Theodoret, for instance, begins his appeal to Rome with a sentiment which, in another age and context, must inevitably sound ironical, and which must have even caused a qualm to the mind of a man whose Scriptural knowledge was as good as Leo's. "If," he says, "*Paul betook himself to Peter that he might carry back from him an explanation to those who were raising questions at Antioch about their conversation in the Law*, much more do I," &c. But even here we have to note that he grounds the primacy of the Roman see on the continuous piety of the Church ; on the possession of the tombs of St. Peter and St. Paul, and on the metropolitan majesty

of Rome in the secular world,—a claim to pre-eminence of which, as we shall see, Leo was singularly shy, applying as it did to Constantinople as well as to Rome. As for Flavian, when he wrote to Leo he treats him altogether as his equal, and advertizes him of the deposition of Eutyches only that “he may put the bishops subordinate to him on their guard.”

At the Council of Chalcedon the respect paid to Leo in the persons of his legates culminating, as we shall see it did, in the twenty-eighth canon, must have seemed almost ironical. The doubtful orthodoxy of so many of the Eastern bishops, the connection of Anatolius with Dioscorus, the authority of Marcian and Pulcheria—all these influences combined with Leo’s own personal share in the controversy of the day to give him the presidency in the council; we notice that he demanded it “on account of the inconstancy of so many of his brethren;” but the presidency when gained was a position of limited influence: Rome could not carry out her wish of excluding Dioscorus altogether; she could not preserve the “Tome” from criticism; she could not rid Theodoret of the necessity of satisfying the *council* as to his orthodoxy, though Rome had already received him; she could not, worst of all, offer effective opposition to the hated twenty-eighth canon. We must also notice the attitude taken up by the council towards Leo’s “Tome” when they received it. It was stamped with approval, not because it came from Rome, but because it was orthodox: that is, in

agreement with the decisions of former councils and with the letters of Cyril, which had conciliar authority. We have seen that Dioscorus' condemnation is represented in the acts of the council as proceeding from Rome *through the synod*, but some doubt is cast upon the authenticity of this sentence by the fact that it exists among Leo's own letters in a different shape. It remains to notice that Leo is called "Bishop of all the Churches," and "Bishop of the Œcumenical Church," by his own legates, and "Œcumenical Archbishop," in a private appeal. It is probably in mistaken reference to those expressions of individuals that Pope Gregory the Great stated that the bishops of Rome were called "universal bishops" by the council of Chalcedon, but that the title thus offered them had been consistently rejected by them. Even as expressions used by individuals, these titles mean very little in the phraseology of the East; we may notice, for instance, that Dioscorus is called "Œcumenical Bishop" in the council at Ephesus.

The flattering opening of the synodical letter of the council to Leo may perhaps be taken as intended to palliate the most unwelcome conclusion. The bishops speak of him as the "interpreter to all of the blessed Peter," they execrate the monstrous conduct of Dioscorus in excommunicating him to whom "the Saviour intrusted the care of the vine;" they describe him as presiding by his legates "as the head over the members," but then the letter continues

in a strain very unpleasant to the "delicacy of Roman ears."

The Council of Constantinople had decreed that the bishop of that see should have the primacy of honour after the bishop of Rome, "because it is itself new Rome." This precedence of honour had in effect become an extensive jurisdiction, and this jurisdiction had now been confirmed in the twenty-eighth canon of the Council of Chalcedon, which ran thus: "The Fathers gave with reason the primacy to the Chair of old Rome, because that was the royal city; and, with the same object in view, the hundred and eighty pious bishops (of Constantinople, the Second Œcumenical Council) assigned equal dignity to the Chair of new Rome" (the phrase is, however, afterwards modified by the expression "*being next after old Rome*"). This elevation of the rank of "new Rome" is grounded on her Imperial position; and it is further allowed that the see of Constantinople "should have the right of ordaining metropolitans in Pontus, Asia, and Thrace, with certain other bishops." This is the canon which the conciliar epistle has to introduce to Leo's notice, and it does so in the most diplomatic terms, assuring Leo that the step has been taken solely in the interest of ecclesiastical order, and professing no doubt that the opposition of his legates will be reversed by Leo's own acceptance of the decree;—for Leo's legates had retired from the session when this canon was to be brought forward, saying they had no instructions from Rome on any such subject. When,

however, they found out what had been done, they made a formal complaint of the violation of ecclesiastical discipline which the canon involved ; they accused the bishops of having signed under compulsion, which they indignantly denied ; finally, they produced the copy of the Nicene canons, in which was interpolated a clause about the Roman primacy which the Oriental bishops at once repudiated. Finding the determination of the council immovable, they could only protest, and returned to Rome with a message of very mixed import for Leo's ears, which gave him complete satisfaction as far as the faith was concerned, but stirred his deepest indignation at the "ambition" of the Church of Constantinople.

It is not our duty now to investigate how far this canon of Chalcedon was in fact dictated by Constantinopolitan ambition, and how far it was inconsistent with the decrees of Nicæa. It is, indeed, more than probable that the self-assertion of Rome excited the jealousy of her rival of the East, and all the Eastern bishops secretly felt that her cause was theirs : but it is more to our purpose to observe how full a proof this decree of Chalcedon is that the Roman claim of supremacy met with no acknowledgment at all in the Eastern Church.

At the same time as the epistle of the council, Leo received letters from the Emperor Marcian, Anatolius, and Julian of Cos, endeavouring to conciliate him in regard to the canon, and expressing their joy at the victory of the faith. Anatolius writes in as conciliatory

a tone as possible, urging that the jurisdiction actually reserved for Constantinople is less than custom has sanctioned ; complaining gently of the conduct of the legates after so much deference had been shown them, and emphasizing the fact that it was at the urgent wish of the emperor, senate and people, that the canon had been passed. We know, perhaps, already enough of Leo's character to anticipate without difficulty that he refused to be thus easily conciliated. He seems to have more than half suspected evil of this council of Chalcedon : he had clearly warned his legates to be on their guard against Constantinopolitan ambition, and now his worst suspicions were more than realized. The tone of his replies is indignant in the extreme. He is astounded and grieved to find that just when the divine hand had restored the peace of the Church, it should be disturbed again by the spirit of ambition. He should have thought that, with Anatolius' doubtful antecedents in the patronage of Dioscorus, an attitude of humility would have best beseeemed him. "Let him remember," he goes on, "the man whose successor he is ; and throwing aside the spirit of pride, let him imitate the faith, the modesty, the humility of Flavian." He calls to mind with indignation the grounds on which Constantinople has received these privileges, as being the second city of the Empire ! As if the primacy of Rome was the result of her being the capital city of the West—not the see of St. Peter ! "The basis of the divine arrangements is not that of the secular state ! There

can be no safe building on any rock, save that which Christ laid as a foundation." From this point of view he speaks very scornfully of the "extorted assent" of the council to this decree (an "assent" which there is every reason to believe was given with the best possible will), and makes short and contemptuous work of the antecedent canon of Constantinople. However many bishops may decree anything contrary to Nicæa, it is null and void. Then, taking his stand on the decrees of Nicæa, he takes up the cudgels for the rights of Antioch and Alexandria, apparently quite against the wishes of Theodoret and Maximus, who presided over those sees and had signed the decrees; nor, indeed, does there seem any real *contradiction* to the canons of Nicæa in the action of Chalcedon, but all through these letters Leo is somewhat wild in his arguments, and seems sublimely unconscious that Rome could in any way be described as a "glass-house" in the matter of ecclesiastical ambition and violation of ancient traditions. The strife was not easily to be calmed. A letter arrives from Marcian, explaining how some, apparently mistaking, or professing to mistake, Leo's attitude towards this canon for opposition to the dogmatic decrees of the council, were sheltering themselves under his authority in refusing their adhesion to them. Leo, in answer, writes to the emperor, sending his assent to the dogmatic definition as a matter of obedience to him, and begging him to make known his adhesion, at the same time making it very clear where his

adhesion stopped. He had now ceased all direct intercourse with Anatolius, but looks eagerly for pretexts of complaint against him. He hears of his favouring a former Eutychian at the expense of a Catholic, and without apparently making very careful inquiries on the rights of the case, he writes begging the emperor to administer to him a stern reproof. To keep himself alive to what goes on in "new Rome" he appoints Julius to reside there as his "apocrisiarius," or representative, and keep him well-informed of what is happening. The emperor, meanwhile, is pleading with Leo for Anatolius; and Leo, giving way not one inch, replies that he is quite ready to be reconciled if Anatolius will repent of his ambitious designs and keep the canons. Anatolius seems never to have been a man of great force and strength of character. It does not even appear how far he was a prime mover himself in the matter of the twenty-eighth canon; at any rate Leo's persistency now wins the day, and produces from him a letter of penitence and self-humiliation, in which he conforms in other respects to the wishes of Leo, and in regard to the twenty-eighth canon speaks thus: "As for the privileges which the universal synod decreed in favour of the Church of Constantinople, let your holiness hold it for certain that there was no fault in me, a man who, from my youth, have loved peace and quiet, keeping myself in humility: it was the clergy of Constantinople, and the bishops of those districts, who had this desire; and yet, even in these matters, the

whole efficacy and confirmation was reserved for the authority of your blessedness. Let your holiness then rest assured that I did nothing to further this matter, having always held myself bound to avoid the lusts of pride and covetousness." Anatolius was clearly not the man to wage an equal war with Leo : as far as he is concerned, the submission is complete, and as such, Leo accepts it and is satisfied. But the claim did not rest with an individual bishop to abrogate, and, as a matter of fact, the canon did take effect, and that in Leo's own lifetime. It was one of the remoter causes of the schism of East and West.

We may sum up our consideration of this famous twenty-eighth canon in Thorndike's words :—"To what effect is that disowned which takes place without him who protests against it? Unless it be set up as a monument of half the Church disowning the infinite power of the pope, the other half not pleading it, but only canonical pre-eminence by the Council of Nicæa." Indeed, though the bishops and the emperor were deferential enough to the pope, yet (if we discount the magnificence of Leo's own personality, and the impression his greatness made on his contemporaries), neither this canon, nor the council's attitude towards Leo's "Tome," nor Leo's own way of talking about it give modern Romanists any cause to look with gratification on the Council of Chalcedon. For, indeed, the Fourth General Council was not only in place, but in theological interests, and in

its traditions of precedence, an Eastern more than a Western council, and the papacy was a Western not an Eastern development.

It remains to present, in brief summary, a few remarks as to the phenomena of the papal authority with which we have been dealing, and to ask whether, from a Christian and Catholic point of view, we are in a position to indicate any judgment upon it.

1st, then, the papacy was a development, and at this date a most imperfect development. When pope Pius IX. proclaimed, "with the consent of the Holy Vatican Council," that the personal infallibility of the pope was a "dogma divinely revealed," and "his definitions are irreformable of themselves, and not by the consent of the Church;" and proclaimed also that, in announcing the dogma, he was but "faithfully adhering to the tradition received from the first beginnings of the Christian faith," he is using language which, in the light of history, we can simply call unintelligible. The papacy was a slow-growing development of the principle of government in the Church. St. Cyprian may be taken as the representative of the Episcopal theory pure and simple, the theory, that is, of the equal (in the main) and independent authority of bishops; this system gave way to the Metropolitan theory, which subordinated the bishops of a district to superiors, who were in a way their representatives in the eye of the universal Church; and pre-eminent, again, among these metro-

politans were the patriarchs. It is easy to represent that this pyramid must have an apex, and that as the bishops had been subordinated to the metropolitans, and the metropolitans to the patriarchs, so the patriarchs should have their head, in turn, in the Pope of Rome. We can understand now why Leo has been called the "Cyprian of the Papacy." The papacy was a development, then, and its roots lie deep-hidden in the early obscurity of the Roman Church; it was nourished, and grew with a natural growth, by the external pressure of circumstances.

But not only so: (2.) it represents also the conscious effort of personal ambition and fraudulent dealing. The magnificent result achieved in the superstructure of the papacy must not blind us to all the marks of the world and the devil's influence, which are to be found upon its foundation and all through its fabric.

(3.) We need not deny that, in some respects, it was a beneficial development of Christian government. We may even say that some such institution was an ecclesiastical necessity in the Middle Ages; but this concession does not help us one step in the direction of accepting the papacy as, in fact, it claimed to be accepted; does not abrogate one jot the moral and intellectual duty of rejecting what is at best a parody of the Divine intention.

(4.) For, taking the papacy at its best, it must be acknowledged to have been a most partial development of the Christian revelation; it was the deve-

lopment of one idea, that of *government*, at the expense of all others—justice, equity, consideration, humility, freedom, universal consent. And because it was partial, therefore it was schismatical. It involved, it necessitated, the severance of East and West; it had latent within it, even in Leo's day, the prophecy of the yet far-off convulsion of the Reformation. The violation of the "proportion of faith" in one direction, the over-riding of one idea, is sure to involve a corresponding excess on the other side. For when Christ committed the treasure of Divine life to the Church, He did indeed promise that the gates of hell should not prevail against it, but He never promised that human infirmity should not mar and thwart the expression of the Divine will or the Divine truth.

The papacy of Leo's day was, as we have said, a very incomplete growth; it had not yet, as we shall see, overwhelmed the representative or ultimately democratical conception of Church government: again, the claim of infallibility is not yet made, or made but in vague and dim hints. How little this later conception had yet dawned upon the West may perhaps best be seen in the famous "Commonitorium," published only a few years before Leo's accession to the papacy. Its author, Vincent, retired like Hilary, to the monastery of Lerins, an island not far from Cannes, and he is known as Vincent of Lerins. This monastery was known at the time as one of the centres of that form of opposition to the extreme Au-

gustinian doctrines, which is vaguely described as semi-Pelagianism ; we say vaguely, for while the term really and strictly represents a more or less definite heresy, the Augustinian party were apt to class together under it all who were scandalized by their extreme Predestinarianism. Among those there seems little doubt that Vincent may be reckoned, though we cannot accuse him of any heretical denial of the doctrines of grace ; and it is even probable that in writing his "Commonitorium," or "Reminder," he intended, by a side glance, to reflect upon the Augustinian doctrine as wanting in that "universality, antiquity and consent" which are the marks of Divine truth. But if this be so, it is not the main object of his treatise, or the cause of its celebrity. Its main object is to set out in clear terms, before an age confused with numberless heresies, the canon of Catholic truth, and this is done in the celebrated formula, "Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus"—that is Catholic truth which has been held from the first, universally, and by common consent in the Church. The importance of this treatise, from our point of view, is that, stamped as it has been by the general approbation of the Church of later ages, it is a clear demonstration how modern are the Roman claims of infallibility. For Vincent is looking at the canon of truth on all sides, he is testing it by all possible difficulties that might arise, yet he never hints that an easy solution of all difficulties as to the faith is to be found by inquiring what

the pope has decreed. He even contemplates the extreme case of the whole Church being corrupted and overspread with heresy, and still to the question—What is the canon of truth? returns the answer—Let a man find out the voice of *antiquity* that cannot be corrupted. Nothing, then, could be more completely anti-Roman than this conception of the canon of doctrine which the age of Leo supplies us with, and yet it proceeds from a man who, as his writings show, held the papacy in the highest veneration, and whose work has become a text-book of Church doctrine.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE TRIUMPH AND DEATH OF LEO.

THOUGH the Council of Chalcedon had finally pronounced the Catholic decision upon Eutychian opinions, it had by no means suppressed the Eutychian faction. It was especially among the monks that this heresy had the firmest hold, and it is to them that the troubles which marked the closing years of Leo's life are due. In Palestine, headed by a man named Theodosius, they were guilty of all sorts of violences, and even succeeded in seizing Jerusalem, dispossessing the Bishop Juvenal and putting a partisan of their own in his place. Rumours of all this naturally excited grave alarm in Leo's mind, though he found some consolation in the zeal which Marcian and Pulcheria showed in the orthodox cause. One thing which troubled him was the fear that his "Tome" had been misinterpreted in being translated into Greek, and might have thus given his enemies ground for calling it Nestorian. It will be remembered that Leo was himself ignorant of Greek, and could not apparently find anybody in Rome who was in a better position. In this fear he addressed another letter to them of almost as much theological value as

“The Tome” itself, in which especial care is taken to exhibit the truth as a mean between the two extremes : of Eutychian error on the one side, and Nestorian on the other. From the epistle some extracts have already been given, in speaking of Leo’s theology of the Incarnation. He also addressed a letter to the Empress Eudocia, who was said to be favouring the monks. This lady, whose name we mention here for the first time, had a career so wonderful, so full of all the elements of an oriental legend, that having named her we must pause to give some brief record of her life.

The beautiful Athenais was educated by her father, Leontius, in the philosophy and religion of the Greeks, and by his special design was left at his death with almost no other provision than her virtue, her learning, and her looks. Driven by the jealousy of her brothers from Athens she sought refuge at Constantinople, and threw herself at the feet of Pulcheria. It took but a little while for that princess to fix upon her as the suitable wife for her imperial brother, and as the complaisant Theodosius fell in love with her in accordance with his sister’s wishes, she very willingly accepted Christianity, with the name Eudocia, married the emperor, and on the birth of a daughter, received the style and title of Augusta. Forthwith she welcomed and pardoned her trembling brothers, whom she had summoned to Constantinople, and then started off on an august pilgrimage of thanksgiving to Palestine, where she

half-exhausted the Imperial treasury with the lavishness of her alms and foundations, outstripping even the magnificence of the Empress Helena. Meanwhile, she exercised her literary talents by poetical paraphrases of Scripture and other poems. But the term of her glory drew near. She ventured to become the rival of her patroness Pulcheria, and had to request permission again to withdraw to Palestine, pursued this time by evil rumours of unfaithfulness to her husband, most probably slanderous. Still tormented by court influences, she at length indulged her feelings of indignation by ordering the massacre of an imperial official, and this outbreak of revenge sealed her disgrace. A life which had seen such strange vicissitudes of fortune was brought to a close by sixteen years of exile in Palestine, which were spent in devotion. She died at Jerusalem in 460. This was the woman who was now accused in her sacred exile of favouring Eutychianism, to which the friendship of the Palestinian monks, and, possibly, a not unnatural opposition to court influences, may have inclined her, for though her husband was now dead, his sister was still probably alive.¹

Leo's exhortations to her were addressed at the secret request of Marcian, but in the letter that remains to us, he urges only religious considerations to move her to exertions in the cause of orthodoxy,

¹ Pulcheria, however, died in the year 453, and is honoured by the Greek Church as a Saint.

and specially the sacred memories of the land of her retirement. Whatever effect these exhortations had on Eudocia, at any rate, in the January of the following year Leo is able to congratulate the emperor on his restoration of order and orthodoxy. Juvenal was restored, not only without the opposition, but with the goodwill and desire of his flock. But "the darkness still broods over Egypt" and elsewhere; indeed, we may say that the immediate result of the Chalcedonian decision was to raise up rival bishops and schismatical troubles in almost all the great sees of the East. A monk, named George, was rallying Cappadocia round the standard of Eutyches; Carosus and Dorotheus were collecting adherents in Constantinople itself; and in the Alexandrian diocese the monks were showing that they could be at least as violent in the cause of heresy as they had been for St. Cyril twenty years before. Dioscorus seems to have remained quietly enough in his exile at Gangra, till his death in 454, but his name lived in the memories of his people, and stirred their animosities against the "Nestorian Council," as they called Chalcedon. Proterius, his orthodox successor, was very ill received, nor did Leo's somewhat over-intellectual remedy of public readings from the earlier bishops of Alexandria, showing them to have held the orthodox faith, and of his "Tome" which he directed Julian to translate over again for them, produce the calming effect desired; perhaps he relied more on Imperial efforts and on the removal of Dioscorus by

death. "Foolish and unstable souls," he graphically writes, "have now something to fear, and nothing to follow"; but the one they should fear soon followed their leader in error into the other world. Marcian, the pillar of orthodoxy, died in 457, and his death was the signal for Eutychian risings at the capital and in Alexandria. The former were suppressed before much harm was done, but the latter rapidly assumed dangerous proportions. A monk called Timothy, and nicknamed "the Cat" ("Ælurus"), was set up in opposition to Proterius; and as a climax of evil, Proterius was brutally massacred in the baptistery, and his body was treated with incredible and almost cannibal outrage. Through all this Leo is prompt and undaunted; his governing mind has full sway of the orthodox party. He writes to this bishop and to that; he marshals their ranks, he directs their energies, he declares his wishes, he demands, "according to the canons," notification of every episcopal election, he stirs up the energies of the new emperor Leo,¹ he keeps up the spirit of the refugee Egyptian clerics, he scouts the notion which emanated from the emperor, of allowing the question of the faith to be reopened in any sort of council or informal conference, he laments the laxity of Anatolius. Not

¹ Leo, an obscure Thracian, who, however, became known as "the Great," ascended the throne as a nominee of an Arian patrician, Aspar, who "might have placed the diadem on his own head if he would have signed the Nicene Creed." The pope does not scruple, we find, to invoke the aid of this latter, though an Arian, against the Eutychians.

content with the remoter influence of letters, he sends legates to Constantinople, "not," as he says, "to dispute, but to teach what is the rule of the apostolic faith;" and as the emperor was constantly being told that his doctrine was Nestorian, he addresses to him a long, dogmatic epistle sometimes known as the "Second Tome," to which is attached an ample collection of patristic testimonies to his own doctrine (1 Dec., 457). The pope's energy apparently moulded the emperor's decision. By his own act he appears to have deposed "the Cat," who was allowed at first to come to Constantinople, but was very soon afterwards banished. Meanwhile, in 458, Anatolius died, and was succeeded by Gennadius, whose orthodoxy was satisfactory to Leo; while another Timothy, with the surname of Solophaciolus, who likewise met with the pope's warm approval, was elected into the vacant see of Proterius. The letters of congratulation which Leo wrote on the occasion to Constantinople and Alexandria are the last of his writings. God allowed him to live just long enough to see religious peace restored to the world, and orthodoxy supreme—to remain so for a period of, at any rate, sixteen years, till after the death of Leo the emperor. His work was done. He had said his "Nunc dimittis." He had felt the full importance of the crisis, and now his eyes had seen the Lord's salvation. "The glory of the day is everywhere arisen," he had written. "The divine mystery of the Incarnation is restored to the age—

it is the world's second festivity since the Advent of the Lord." He died late in the year 461, the representative of sober, Western, practical, Christianity, at the very time when the people of Antioch were lavishing an excess of veneration on the just-dead body of the fantastic ascetic Symeon of the Pillar. Leo was buried in the Church of St. Peter. At the end of the seventh century the body was removed by Pope Sergius from its first position, where a crowd of tombs had gradually collected round it, to a more honourable place, and it was again transferred with great pomp, in 1607, to the new Basilica. There was another translation to its present position in 1763. Leo has been honoured in the Church as a saint and confessor. He has also been commonly known as "The Great." A decree of Benedict XIV., in 1754, raised him to the title and cultus of a "doctor of the Church." He is commemorated in the Eastern Church on Feb. 18; in the Western, on April 11, possibly the day of the first translation of his body.

If we may define a "great man" as one who maintains universal interests with consistency and power, we shall surely feel that Leo has every right to this title. There was at least nothing little, nothing weak to be found in his conception of life or in his conduct of it. Nor can anything except blind prejudice grudge him his canonization.¹ Identifying, as he

¹ The Protestant theologian Dumoulin classes him and Gregory the Great as "les deux bons Papes."

did, the interest of Christianity with the supremacy of that authority which centred in his own see, he had that sort of ambition for which his order has been distinguished—the sort of ambition which is least personal and least vicious. That in the exercise and extension of his prerogative, as he deemed it, he was not always strictly conscientious we have been constrained to admit. He urged a false plea when he urged the Canon of Nicæa as justifying his claims of universal appellate jurisdiction, and he can hardly have urged it ignorantly. In his hostility to Anatolius he was not careful to be just: he pursued with something like relentless bigotry—and this was the worst act of his life—perhaps the greatest saint of his age. But, as an overbalancing claim on the other side of the account, let us reckon that the world has seldom seen a life dedicated more unreservedly and more simply in all its parts and powers to Christ and His Church; seldom an eye more single, a purpose more clear, or action aimed more directly or continuously at God's greater glory. Add to this the consideration of his personal life and Christian character, as it is shown to us, especially in his sermons; that strong, simple, sensible, manly Christianity; that unsparing claim upon his own life first, and then on that of those committed to his charge at Rome; that modesty which keeps himself and his exploits so completely hidden through all his manifold and glorious activities—and who, even of those most opposed to papal aggrandizement, can refuse to

rise and own him a saint? Nor must we forget how large the debt we owe to him for preserving unimpaired to us the priceless treasure of a faith in our Lord's Humanity.

CHAPTER IX.

LEO THE DISCIPLINARIAN.

THERE have been preserved to us some hundred and seventy of Leo's letters, and nearly a hundred sermons, from which to draw our conception of his character and his work. Of the letters, a very large proportion are occupied with the Eutychian controversy and those universal Church interests of his day of which we have already given some account. To political matters we have, except as far as they are necessarily interwoven with ecclesiastical affairs, almost no allusion; there are no reflections on those facts which give secular importance to the fifth century, the passing away of the old order in the Romish Empire, and the surging in upon the world of the undisciplined barbarian hordes; no speculations as to the future; no sign that Leo perceived the part the papacy should play in moulding modern society. To Maximus, to Avitus, to Majorian, whose reigns in the West coincided with the last six years of Leo's life, we have no kind of allusion. All his interests during these years, so far as letters reflect them, are centred in the East and her theological troubles. Leo, we must conclude, like his successors, "specialized his functions,"

and did his work in the sphere God had intrusted to him, without troubling himself to go beyond it. His feelings as a Roman are all directed into the channel of the Church.

There are, however, some aspects of Leo's activity which come out in his letters which we have reserved for summary here—one of these is his disciplinary zeal: his enactments in this direction help to throw an interesting light on the condition of the Church of his age. First of all we have, in the matter of ecclesiastical order, one example of Leo yielding to the influence of other sees. In the year 444 (as, indeed, on other occasions) the right day for celebrating Easter was in dispute. According to the Roman calendar it should fall on March 26, according to the Alexandrian on the 23rd. Consultations took place: St. Cyril's reply insists strongly on the Alexandrian calculation. Paschasinus, whom Leo consulted, though he writes in an almost groveling tone of deference, still insinuates that Alexandria is right, and Leo consents to yield, though he does so, he says, for unity's sake, not because his reason is persuaded. It was not often that desire for unity led Leo to submit the judgment of his own see to external influences. He had another conception of the true mode of promoting unity, but probably here he could not have carried his point, and concession was only common prudence. Jealous as Leo was for his own see and her prerogatives, he could have an eye to those of others where his own were

not in danger. Thus we find him reproving a bishop of Frejus for consulting him first instead of his metropolitan. He is the final, not the primary court of appeal.

In general, his conception of the episcopal office is a very lofty one. The bishop is to be stern and relentless in suppressing error and vice. "It is negligent rulers who nurture a plague by shrinking from austere remedies:" strong government, he seems to think (though, perhaps, by this period of the world's experience his eyes would have been opened), is the antidote to all evils. "Where obedience is secure doctrine will be sound." Still the government is to be a government of love and discretion. "Firmness must be rendered acceptable by courtesy, justice tempered by mildness, and the best bridle for license is patient dealing." "We must continue," he says to Rusticus, bishop of Narbo, "in the work intrusted to us and in the labours we have undertaken. We must uphold justice with constancy, and show clemency with loving-kindness. What we have to hate is not men, but sins. While we rebuke the proud we must bear with the weak; and when necessity arises for severer castigation, let it be administered, not in the spirit of wrath, but of healing."

As regards the discipline of the clerical office, we find ourselves on the verge of the celibate restriction. A second marriage, we have seen, or marriage of a widow, even in the lay state, is a bar to orders; and all who are in orders must, if they are married men,

abstain from the privileges of matrimony. Another rather curious bar to orders in Leo's eyes is the condition of a slave. He bases his refusal to allow the ordination of slaves on the ground that their condition does not leave them the liberty and leisure requisite for a priest; but it is couched in language which breathes the spirit of a Roman patrician much more than the feeling that in "Christ Jesus there is neither bond nor free." He talks of the "dignity of birth" being wanting to them, and he speaks scornfully of "the mean estate (*vilitas*) of a slave polluting the Christian ministry."

While we are on the subject of ordination, it is important to notice, that though in Leo the theory of ecclesiastical government from above, centred in one supreme head, is in conspicuous prominence, it has not yet swallowed up the democratic and representative conception of Church authority. A bishop is two things—he is a channel of divine grace in a special manner, in which capacity the term "*sacerdos*"¹ (priest), is given him, *par excellence*; and he is also a governor or supreme pastor, and in this capacity is called *episcopus* (surveyor). Now his specifically sacerdotal functions belong to him in virtue of his consecration, pure and simple. They are quite independent of other considerations; but his canonical authority depends, in Leo's conception, on something more than this. To govern the Church

¹ "*Sacerdos*" in Leo's days generally means a *bishop*.

he must represent the Church : and this is an ingredient of all right episcopal authority, which is far too often forgotten in our days. Listen to Leo's stern sentences :—" He who is to preside over all, must be elected of all." " Before a consecration must go the suffrages of the citizens, the approbation of the people, the judgment of persons of distinction, the choice of the clergy ; that the rule of Apostolic authority may be in all respects observed, which enjoins that a priest to govern the Church should be supported, not only by the approval of the faithful, but also by the testimony of those without." (1 Tim. iii. 7.) " No metropolitan do we allow to ordain a priest (bishop) on his own judgment, without the consent of clergy and people : the consent of the whole community (state) must elect the president of the Church : " only where division makes unanimity impossible the metropolitan may decide the election in favour of the man who has the best support. " No reason can tolerate " (he says finally to the African bishops), " that persons *should be held to be bishops* who were neither elected by the clergy, nor demanded by the laity, nor ordained by the provincial bishops with the consent of the metropolitan ; " that is, they are bishops as far as divine functions go (for he goes on to intimate the sacramental validity of their ordination), in virtue of their consecration by whatever two bishops it may have been performed ; but they have no right to exercise episcopal supervision, because they lack the delegation of the Church. The terms

Leo uses are vague : we cannot distribute exactly the influence of clergy and laity, and the still more indeterminate weight which is to be allowed to outside public opinion : that is to say, he is stating a principle, not laying down regulations ; but the *principle* emerges clear and distinct, that it is *in virtue of what he represents* that a bishop governs, and that episcopal authority is not personal and absolute, but representative and constitutional ; that a bishop should not be imposed from above by authorities, whether in Church or State, but raised from below. How much the Church has been the loser, and how impossible the due exercise of episcopal authority can become by the neglect of this principle, we are ourselves in a position to conceive. Its execution, in Leo's day, was facilitated by the canonical restrictions which forbade clergy ordained in one Church to "wander" to others. The character of the possible bishops in any Church would then be well known to all the clergy, and all would have to have risen through the inferior office. Searching and exact repudiation of all heresies is of course a condition of episcopal election which no consent of a particular Church can over-ride. The part is subject to the whole.

As regards the administration of the Sacraments, we may notice as a point of interest that Baptism was still (except in cases of necessity) to be given only at Easter and Pentecost. A rule of the Roman Church as regards the Mass brings out the relation

in which the priest was understood to stand to the people. The oblation of the Eucharist is the act of the whole people, acting through or by the priest, not of the individual priest for himself. The oblation is therefore in a normal way to be offered once only on any day, but it is to be repeated on festival days as often as may be necessary to enable all the faithful to offer, where the church cannot hold them all at once.

In regard to the discipline of penitence, we see in Leo's time the transition from public to private discipline. All reconciliation of the lapsed he asserts to be through priestly ministration, and he gives abundant regulations for the supervision of penitents who are publicly known as such ; but in the ordinary cases, "in the case of the penitence which is required of the faithful," he directs that private confession first to God, and then to the priest (or bishop ?) should be substituted for the public confession which was calculated to cause scandal, such as would have the effect of deterring people from penitence at all. Persons undergoing penitence are exhorted to abstain from commerce and the civil law courts, while abstinence from military service is commanded, and abstinence from marriage is recommended in the case of persons who have at any time been excommunicated.

We may notice, in conclusion, how strongly in the spirit of the Church of that age he condemns the taking usury or interest on money, whether by clergy or laity : "it lacks all humanity," he says, and,

playing on the words, "the usury of money is the death of the soul (*fœnus pecuniæ, funus animæ*)."

These regulations may suffice to give us some kind of idea of the disciplinary system which Leo administered in an age when secular disturbances, and barbarian inroads made any discipline very difficult.

CHAPTER X.

LEO, THE THEOLOGIAN.

THE extracts we have already made from Leo's theological letters on the subject of the Incarnation will have given us some idea of his style and manner. We shall have gathered that he is always stern, trenchant, dogmatic, terse, never diffuse or flowery in his language. He has a definite doctrine to enforce, and his whole energy is concentrated in its enforcement : never was there a man who allowed less of his own personal feelings to intrude themselves into his theology, or, it is perhaps truer to say, whose personality was so wholly and completely merged in reverence for dogmatic truth and zeal for its exhibition and preservation. In his theological statements we can hardly have failed to notice and admire the sureness and clearness of his grasp on the doctrine of the Incarnation ; the absolute balance of mind with which he emphasizes its various aspects in the "proportion of faith ;" the wisdom with which avoiding all small, insignificant, or doubtful arguments, he occupies himself with enforcing large and positive conceptions, and insists constantly on the practical bearing and result

of a doctrine. This is one out of several indications of the entirely Western character of his theology. It is wholly on the practical, not the speculative side. There is no theorizing or philosophizing on the relation of persons in the Trinity, only a supreme grasp on the dogma as a thing of most intensely practical moment. The doctrine is to him not so much a subject of contemplation as an instrument for governing and subduing the world and the passions of men.

In his statements of the doctrine of the Trinity we notice a most striking resemblance to the language of the Athanasian Creed. "The Nature of the Only-begotten is the Nature of the Father and the Nature of the Holy Spirit; alike impassible, alike unchangeable is the undivided unity and consubstantial equality of the Eternal Trinity." "Between the Father and the Son there is no difference in essence, no diversity in Majesty." "It is eternal to the Father to be the Father of the co-eternal Son : it is eternal to the Son to be begotten of the Father out of all time : it is eternal to the Holy Spirit to be the Spirit of the Father and the Son ; so that the Father has never been without the Son, or the Son without the Father, or the Father and the Son without the Spirit, and all idea of gradation of existence being excluded, none of the Three has there priority or inferiority. Thus the unchangeable Deity of the Blessed Trinity is one in substance, undivided in operation, concordant in will, alike in power, equal in glory." "The whole

Trinity is together one Influence, one Majesty, one Substance, unsevered in operation, inseparable in love, indifferent in power, together filling all things, containing the universe : for what the Father is, that, too, is the Son, and that is the Holy Spirit." This theology in style and language is exactly the theology of the Athanasian Creed, and has a thoroughly Western cast. The doctrine of the East is of course essentially the same : the full and absolute and equal Divinity of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost in the unity of the One God is truth for East and West alike ; but take this statement, for example, out of the writings of St. Basil, and it will be evident that it could not live in quite the same theological atmosphere as the statement we have quoted from Leo. " ' My Father is greater than I,' that is, as far forth as Father, since what else does ' Father' signify than that He is the cause and origin of Him who was begotten by Him ?" " The Son is second in order to the Father, since He is from Him ; and in dignity, inasmuch as the latter is the origin and cause of His existence."

These statements may be explained¹ by the words of Bishop Bull, "The Catholic Doctors, both before and after the Nicene Council, are unanimous in declaring that the Father is greater than the Son, even as to Divinity ; *i.e.* not in nature or any

¹ Newman's "Arians of the Fourth Century," cap. ii. § 3, from whom the quotations are borrowed.

essential perfection which is in the Father and not in the Son, but alone in what may be called authority, that is, in point of origin, since the Son is from the Father, not the Father from the Son." In accepting this statement about the Catholic Fathers we must surely add that the refinement would have been alien to the spirit of Leo and the spirit of the Athanasian Creed. It is far from contradicting that Creed: it asserts indeed all that the Creed asserts—the essential and real equality of the Three Persons, as God, only it adds something, viz., that there is a transcendental priority, even though neither of time, nor of any assignable quality, which is inherent in the idea of Fatherhood. Such a representation was suited to the Eastern, not the Western mind; it was philosophical more than theological, it concerned the conception of human thought about the Trinity, rather than the Faith in it; and the Athanasian Creed expresses that which, the philosophizing apart, is the common creed of East and West. Leo's theology, then, is the theology of the Athanasian Creed.

We may further refer to a passage quoted on the doctrine of the Incarnation (p. 58), where the metaphor of the union of soul and body in man is used to illustrate the union of the Divine and Human natures in Christ, as it is in the Athanasian Creed, and we may add, by Vincent of Lerins, the contemporary of Leo. All these connections between the theology and language of Leo and his contempo-

raries and of the Athanasian Creed are of importance as indicating the date of the Creed. It may be taken as certain, that it is a Western document, and that its style and theological statements would fix its date in the fourth century. We may add that the absence of actual reference to the phrase "two natures" in Christ is a probable indication that the Creed antedates the Eutychian controversy. It is a summary of the theology of the Trinity and the Incarnation, adapted to the use of the West, in view of all the known heresies, enclosing the true doctrine within the lines of utterly unambiguous and trenchant formulæ; a summary which, though we cannot assign it to Leo as its author, or indeed determine its source more accurately than by ascribing it with all probability to the South Gallican Church, we may at least describe without danger of error as couched in the theological language and breathing the highest dogmatic spirit of that period of Western theology of which Leo is the greatest representative: it is the theology of the Church, as with purpose clear, to govern and to Christianise the new age dawning on the world, she encased the faith of her spirit in a mould of cast-iron, wherein it might live in uncontaminated power through all the periods of intellectual deadness and military disorder, and through the Babel of tongues which belongs to ages of "new learning" and intellectual revival.

Of Leo's statement of the theology of the Incar-

nation we have already said enough, but his mode of treating the Atonement requires notice. A passage quoted (p. 60) will show that Leo, like every Christian, held that the sacrifice of Christ availed to enable the Father to pardon man and reconcile him to Himself. This is the common substratum of all Christian doctrine on the Atonement; but in conceiving the mode in which the sacrifice effected the reconciliation, great differences are found between different periods of Christian theology; indeed this could hardly be otherwise.

The revelation of the Bible does not go beyond the teaching that Christ's death had a reconciling and propitiatory power in the sight of God; the mode of its action and the ground of its necessity and justice are left to our conceptions, which on so mysterious a subject are very certain to be various. Thus some have held that the love of God in Christ made satisfaction to His justice—others (though this is certainly unscriptural) that the love of the Son propitiated the wrath of the Father. Leo, in common with many great teachers of the early Church, held a different, now almost completely-abandoned view. With him, though God requires the sacrifice as a condition of man's reconciliation, yet the sacrifice appears to be made, not to God, but the devil. A ransom has to be paid to deliver man from captivity. This ransom is paid to the tyrant who holds the captives: that tyrant is the devil. As man had fallen by his free will, he is *justly* under the dominion of

the devil. The devil has rights over him, rights that he would retain unless that humanity which he had conquered could conquer him again. Now in redeeming man God chose to overcome the devil by the rule of justice, not of power. Whereas His omnipotence could have torn man from his clutches without any regard to his (so to speak) just claims, He preferred to defeat him in fair and equal fight. For this purpose He became man, and His Incarnation deceived the devil. Seeing the child suffering the sorrows and pains of childhood, seeing Him grow by natural stages to manhood, having had so many proofs that He was mortal, he concluded that He was infected with the poison of original sin. He set therefore in motion against Him all his methods and instruments of persecution, as if he were only exercising a right upon sin-stained humanity, his slave. He spent his whole force on Him, thinking that if He must yield to death whose virtues exceed so far those of all the saints, he would be secure of his dominion over everyone else. But in persecuting and slaying Christ whom was he slaying? One who though Man was sinless, and owed him nothing, in whom he had nothing. But thus by exacting the penalty of iniquity from Him in Whom he found no fault, he exceeded his bond; he went beyond his right—he broke his covenant. This injustice in demanding too much, cancelled the whole debt of man due to him; his rights are over: man is free, and the nails which pierced our Lord's

hands and feet at the instigation of the devil, thus really transfixed the devil himself with perpetual wounds. Such is the theory. The sacrifice of Christ on this showing was the paying off by God in human nature of the debt due to the devil. It was a transaction between Man (though that Man was also God) and the devil, and it is difficult to see in what relation this transaction stands to the sacrifice which Leo constantly conceives in common with all Christians as having been offered to God. Certainly we should feel that though his conception of the dominion of the devil over human nature tallies well with such Scriptural expressions as "the Prince of this world," "Prince of the power of the air," "the God of this world," the further refinements as regards the deception of the devil by the Incarnation are neither Scriptural nor agreeable to our feelings of reverence, and we may feel grateful that we are dealing here with a phase of Christian opinion, not with a Church doctrine.

It is rather strange that living as Leo did so near the Pelagian controversy, and having occupied a foremost place in its suppression in Italy, we should have so little upon the subject in his writings. Of course, when he does speak about it his language is thoroughly orthodox. "The whole gift of good works is due to the previous operation of God : no man is justified by virtue before grace, which is to every man the beginning of righteousness, the fount of good, the source of merit : " nothing in us then ante-

dates the operation of grace, all are in need of the salvation of Christ.

While speaking of grace we may notice that Leo very constantly dwells upon the gift of grace to man as a *gradual* process, only culminating in the Incarnation and descent of the Holy Ghost. "God did not take a new counsel for man, or look upon him with mercy only at the end of the days, but he established one and the same ground of salvation for all men from the beginning of the world. The grace of God, by which the whole body of saints is justified, was given when Christ was born (not for the first time, but) only in larger measure. The sacrament of great holiness (the Incarnation) with which now the world is filled, was so powerful even in its previous indications that they obtained it no less who believe the promise than who welcomed the gift." "In former ages, as well, the light of truth was sent out to illuminate the holy patriarchs and prophets; and in diverse ways and manifold signs the Deity of the Son declared the operations of His presence." "All the saints who preceded our Saviour's time were by this faith justified, by this sacrament made the body of Christ, expecting the universal redemption of believers in the seed of Abraham."

Thus there was no beginning to the operation of the Holy Spirit upon man since his creation. "Firmly holding the faith, then, beloved, let us not doubt that when the Holy Ghost on the

Day of Pentecost filled the disciples of the Lord, this was not the beginning of the gift, but its completion : for patriarchs and prophets and priests, and all the holy men of former times, flourished by the sanctification of the same Spirit ; and outside this grace no sacraments were ever instituted, no mysteries ever celebrated—the virtue of the grace was always the same, though there is a change in the measure of the gift.”

As regards the merits and cultus of saints, we notice in Leo a complete absence of anything which might be called superstition. Indeed, there is a very marked difference in this respect between the writings of Leo and those of his great successor, Gregory the First. The exaggeration of saint-worship and the growth of legend have been very great in the interval. As for Leo, he holds that the merits of saints can work wonders, and give aid to the Church on earth. He speaks often of St. Peter assisting the people with his prayers and with his merits, and in a similar strain of St. Paul and St. Lawrence—all of them saints especially connected with Rome. He attributes, again, the deliverance of the city from the barbarians to the care of the saints ; and the Leonine Sacramentary, which contains certainly much belonging to his age, is full of such prayers as this : “ Assist us, Lord, by the prayers of thy saints, that we who celebrate their festival may experience their aid.” But it is noticeable that he never alludes to the Blessed Virgin at all as assisting us by her prayers, nor to any other

saints save those mentioned above ; nor even in their case does he *invoke* them or direct them to be invoked.¹

Speaking generally, we may say that what is constantly present to his mind is the thought that they are aiding the Church by their patronage, prayers, and merits. Elsewhere, he very jealously distinguishes between the value of the martyrdom of saints and that of the death of Christ. "The saints received crowns, but gave them not, and to their courage we owe examples of patience, not gifts of righteousness." "No man's goodness affects himself alone ; but the holiness of the martyrs affects us by way of *example*—it is better to teach in act than in word." To relics we have no allusion, except in so far as he rejoices in the body of St. Flavian being brought back to Constantinople, and excites the zeal of Juvenal and Eudocia in Palestine by the memory of the local memorials amidst which they moved. His sermons, as Dean Milman has truly said, "are singularly Christian ; Christian, in dwelling almost exclusively on Christ, His birth, His passion, His resurrection !"

The practical discipline of the Christian life falls, in Leo's teaching, under three heads, Prayer, Fasting, Almsgiving ; and, orthodox as Leo undoubtedly was on the subject of Divine *grace*, he is never behind-

¹ We may notice, in passing, that Leo expressly denies the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. "Jesus Christ alone, among the sons of men was born innocent : for He alone was conceived without the pollution of carnal concupiscence."

hand in laying a wholesome practical stress upon *good works*. "By prayer, the mercy of God is sought, by fasting, the lusts of the flesh are extinguished, by almsgiving, satisfaction is made for sin." "In alms and fasting lie the most effectual petitions for pardon, and the prayer which is winged by such suffrages rises more speedily to the ears of God." Almsgiving he uses in a broad sense, almost equivalent to love. "Alms destroy sins," he says, quoting Ecclus. iii. 30, "abolish death, extinguish the penalty of eternal fire." It is a grace without which we can have no other; while "he who has cleansed himself by almsgiving need not doubt that even after many sins the splendour of the new birth will be restored to him." (cf. St. Luke xi. 41). But in all this it is the spirit of the giver, not the mere matter of the gift, which is to be looked to. We must be careful *how* we give; as, for example, not to patronize the forward and overlook the retiring. "There are some who blush to ask openly for what they need, and prefer suffering under the misery of silent want to undergoing the confusion of making a public request." Such must be sought out and their poverty relieved, while their modesty is unhurt. "Blessed is he," says the Psalmist (Ps. xl. 1, Vulgate), "who *understandeth about* the poor and needy." There should be a special care for slaves and a remembrance of the heathen, as well as the poor Christians. Above all, let the gift be the gift of a good will: gifts not made in the spirit of faith, though they be never so large, avail nothing;

“according as the originating *will* is good the gift is reckoned ;” and “no man’s income is small whose soul is large.” The spirit of almsgiving is the spirit of love. “There is no love without faith, and no faith without love.” Such is the spirit in which Leo loves to deal with the duty of almsgiving ; of his mode of speaking on fasting we have said enough above. Before concluding this notice of Leo’s ascetic theology, there are two points which it is worth while to notice.

First : that in Leo we become constantly conscious of the superior value of corporate over individual action. In fasting, in praying, in giving alms he would have the Church act altogether, and be conscious of the communion of their whole life, and the interaction of all their efforts. “The fullest abolition of sins,” he says, “is obtained when the whole Church joins in one prayer and one confession. For if the Lord has promised to grant whole whatever is asked by the pious consent of two or three, what can be denied to a people of many thousands celebrating together one observance, and praying with united hearts through the one spirit?” “Though it is open to every one of us to visit our body with voluntary punishments, and now more moderately, now more sharply, to subdue the lusts which war against the spirit, yet on certain days it is expedient we should celebrate all together a *general* fast ; and our devotion is more effectual and more holy as the Church is giving herself as a whole to works of piety with one will and one

intention. Public acts are preferable to private, and the attention of all in common gives the best ground for expecting useful results."

At the same time the communion of effort is to him strictly consistent with individual freedom, as regards the choice of the degree and mode of self-discipline. "Let us embrace," he says, "the blessed strength of holy union and enter the solemn fast with the concordant purpose of a good will. Nothing hard or difficult is asked of any one, nor anything enjoined upon us which exceeds our strength, whether in the infliction of abstinence or the giving of alms. Each one of you knows what he can do and what he cannot. Each must fix his own standard, each must rate himself at a just and reasonable estimate, that the sacrifice of mercy may not be offered with sadness, nor reckoned among the losses of life. Let him give to this pious work so much as shall justify his heart, wash his conscience, in a word, be a blessing alike to him who takes and him who gives. That soul indeed is blessed and much to be admired who through love of doing good fears not loss of means, and doubts not that He who has given him money to spend will do so still. But as the magnanimity belongs but to a few, and as the work of looking after a man's own household is one most full of piety, without prejudice to the more perfect, we give it as a general rule to you to work according to the measure of the means which God has given you. That benevolence to be cheerful, which so controls its gifts that while it relieves

and rejoices the poor, it brings not want upon its own home. Let us fast, then, Wednesday and Friday, and keep our vigils together on Saturday in St. Peter's,¹ by whose merits and prayers we trust that the mercy of God will be with us through all, through our Lord Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth," &c.

Secondly : we are bound to notice a peculiarity in Leo's penitential sermons, viz., the slight allusion he makes to what we should be apt to call the chief element of repentance, confession of sin. The far greater stress is laid on the practice of the contrary virtues or works of reparation. Even where he is speaking in Lent on the remedies for sins, as well those of habitual laxity, as the more venial and incidental, and in preparation for the Easter communion, he makes almost no allusion to confession, sacramental or otherwise, but talks of the duties of self-knowledge, fastings, works of mercy, prayer, self-discipline, as the means of purification. Forgiveness of injuries is much insisted on from the same point of view : "Let the man who contracted the stain of malice, seek the cleansing of benevolence." All this would seem to indicate that in Leo's mind penitence and progress, conversion and sanctification were not separated in the life of the ordinary Christian, not under ecclesiastical discipline, as much as they are with us.

It remains to make some notice of Leo as a

¹ The occasion is the September Fast.

Preacher.¹ No cares of the universal Church ever could induce him to neglect his personal duties to his own community; he was throughout a diligent pastor and preacher. We have sermons "for his birthday;"² sermons "for the collections," or stated day of the year (in July), when by a custom instituted in place of a still older Pagan solemnity, the Roman Christians gave alms; sermons for the Fast of the 10th Month—Advent as we should say; sermons for Christmas, Epiphany, the Transfiguration, Lent, Passiontide, Easter, Ascension-tide, Pentecost, the Pentecostal Fast, St. Peter's and St. Paul's Day, with its octave, St. Laurence's Day and the September Fast.

Of the substance of these sermons, dogmatic or practical, we have already given some account. A few of their characteristics it remains to notice. First, then, they are very short and very simple. A Greek writer tells us that in the end of the fourth century at Rome neither the bishop nor anyone else preached in the church to the people. However this may be, the style and brevity of Leo's sermons assure us that there is no tradition of pulpit eloquence behind him. Their brevity of style is such as would make them more suitable to be read than merely listened to; but they bristle with epigrams of deep moral significance, which must have caught the ear

¹ For a translation of many of St. Leo's "Sermons on the Incarnation" see Dr. Bright's edition. London: Masters, 1862.

² Vide supra, p. 82.

and impressed themselves on the memory of his hearers. Their general character is well-described by Milman : " They contrast with the florid, desultory, and often imaginative and impassioned style of the Greek preachers. They are brief, simple, severe ; without fancy, without metaphoric subtleties, without passion : it is the Roman censor animadverting with nervous majesty on the vices of the people ; the Roman prætor dictating the law and delivering with authority the doctrine of the faith." At the same time we must say that this account seems to underrate the disciplined, but intense and most real feeling which breathes in so much that he says, the sympathy of the pastor with his people, and the love and humility which temper the severity.

We may notice, also, the practical aim of all he says. If he is stating dogma, it is as a basis of life ; if he is enlarging on a mystery, it is as a motive to reverence of thought and joyful submission of intellect ; if some merchants arrive from the East and justify Eutyches, Leo is in the pulpit at once with the true doctrine ; do the people desert the tombs of the martyrs and their festivals for the races and the games, Leo is prompt to warn them of the sin and danger of ingratitude. No dangerous tendency which he observes in their lives escapes unnoticed. A relic of paganism survived in a prevalent custom of turning and bowing to the rising sun as people went into St. Peter's. However they may explain and justify such a practice to themselves as a worship of the Creator,

not of His creature, it is paganism, says Leo, and must cease. Specially he is careful to admonish against the sins of avarice and worldliness an age no longer tried by the fires of persecution. The devil has other arts besides those of open violence, and they are not always the least successful.

A word must be said on another aspect in which Leo is presented to us. He is the reputed originator of the collect. "The Collect as we have it," says Dr. Bright, "is Western in every feature: in that 'unity of sentiment and severity of style' which Lord Macaulay has admired; in its Roman brevity and majestic conciseness, its freedom from all luxuriant ornament and inflation of phraseology;" and not only is it undoubtedly Western, but there is no writer of the West to whose style it can bear a closer resemblance than to St. Leo's. We have a "Sacramentary," the earliest of the Roman Church which has come down to us, which contains a number of these collects, and much of it, at any rate, belongs to Leo's age, and very probably may have been composed by him. The collect in the English Prayer-book for the Third Sunday after Easter (referring originally to the newly-baptized on Easter-Eve), for the Fifth Sunday after Trinity (suggested by the disasters of the expiring Empire of the West), and for the Ninth, Thirteenth, and Fourteenth Sundays, after Trinity, are from the Leonine Sacramentary.¹

¹ Bright's "Ancient Collects," pp. 208, 209.

It will not be wholly out of place to mention before we take leave of Leo and his writings that tradition looks back to him as the benefactor of many of the Roman Churches : he is said to have restored their silver ornaments after the ravages of the Vandals, and to have repaired the basilicas of St. Peter and St. Paul, placing a mosaic in the latter which represented the adoration of the four-and-twenty elders : we are told also that he built a Church of St. Cornelius, established some monks at St. Peter's, instituted guardians for the tombs of the Apostles, and erected a fountain before St. Paul's where the people might wash before entering the Church.

CHAPTER XI.

LEO AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES.

THE course of the narrative has already given us some acquaintance with a considerable number of the contemporaries of Leo. There are, however, some with whom he came into more or less direct contact whose names or whose actions we have not yet had occasion to mention. There is, for example, a figure sufficiently clearly marked in the Church history of the period, but which looms with phantom-like indistinctness at the elbow of Leo in some close, but to our eyes at this distance of time, utterly indefinite relation to him and his activities. St. Prosper of Aquitaine is well-known as the able and steadfast defender of Augustinianism against the semi-Pelagians. Perhaps his most celebrated work in this cause is a poem "on the ungrateful," that is, those who denied or limited the action of Divine grace on the human will. The chief merit of this hexameter poem is no doubt its orthodoxy, for neither the conviction of truth, nor the enthusiasm which pervades them, can overcome the irredeemable dulness of these four books. Prosper, however, seems to have had real poetical ability, espe-

cially if a beautiful little poem of a husband to his wife is really his. Besides his poetry he wrote a work against Cassian, and is known also as a chronicler of his age. This man seems to have been brought by Leo with him to Rome as his secretary, his great theological knowledge rendering him an invaluable ally. Curiously enough he is never named in Leo's works, but tradition even goes so far as to assert that he was the real author of Leo's theological letters. There is every reason to disbelieve this. Leo's personality is very marked and distinct, and appears continually the same and unmistakable in his acts and writings, theological and practical; nor, indeed, is the tradition we have alluded to anything but vague; there is, however, no reason to doubt that St. Prosper gave Leo all the assistance which an able and zealous secretary can give his chief. It is probable that he survived his master.

A greater man was his opponent, John Cassian, a monk of Palestine (whether Oriental by birth or not is somewhat uncertain), who had visited more than once the Solitaries and Cœnobites of Egypt, and had laid deep to heart the lessons of their self-mastery. He came to Constantinople in the beginning of the fifth century, and became the deacon and fervent disciple of St. Chrysostom. Sent to Rome in 405, he very probably remained there for some years, and may there have made the acquaintance of St. Leo, to whom, as we have seen, he alludes in terms of high praise in his work

on the Incarnation, written about A.D. 430. Cassian's place in history is important in two aspects. First: he is the chief representative of semi-Pelagianism. Revolted alike by the heresy of Pelagius, and by the extreme annihilation of human free-will involved in the Augustinian doctrine, he endeavoured to steer a middle course, keeping to the teaching of his great master St. Chrysostom. In this attempt he fell no doubt into the partial denial of "Prevenient Grace," but the general aim of his doctrine is thoroughly Christian. The other chief aspect of his work is more important. He was the legislator and founder of Western Monasticism. About 410 he seems to have retired to Marseilles and founded two communities, one of men and the other of women. His works on the regulations of monastic life, imbued as they are with a profound respect for the asceticism of the East, had a very great influence on the monasticism of the West. It is more important for us to notice this activity in the direction of monasticism, because this is one of the tendencies of Leo's time (the future importance of which we cannot overrate), of which we hear almost nothing in his life and writings. The tradition of his having established a monastic community at Rome, if true, may be taken as a sign of his sympathy with it, but, indeed, without such sign we can hardly fail to see that the whole tendency of Leo's mind—all his love of discipline, order, government—all his practical enthusiasm, would have found a fitting issue in the monasticism

of St. Benedict. Cassian would seem to have survived the beginning, at any rate, of Leo's pontificate.

We may mention another noteworthy character with whom tradition brings Leo in contact. St. Valentine, traditionally known as Bishop of Passau, was apparently consecrated bishop by St. Leo, for missionary work in Rhoetia. He was one of that noble army of martyrs, in will if not in deed, who were the Apostles of the still barbarian tribes out of which the nations of modern Europe were to arise. What is chiefly remarkable in the record we have of St. Valentine's labour is the simple way in which his protracted want of success, and consequent despondency, is recorded. A far more celebrated name belonging to this class is St. Patrick, whose apostolic labours in Ireland seem to have been contemporaneous with Leo's pontificate. Another of whom we have a much more authentic account is St. Severinus, "the Apostle of Noricum"—certainly one of the most saintly, and at the same time simple and vigorous characters of his time.¹ His mission began about the year 455, and his stern asceticism and boundless love and devotion seem to have given him an almost unlimited influence and authority over the Arian and pagan tribes amongst whom he laboured. His life is full of significance and prophecy, and sets before us in a vivid and touching picture the power of the religion

¹ See Charles Kingsley's "Hermits."

of Christ over rough but not unfeeling hearts. It will be seen without difficulty how these pioneers of religion were preparing the way for the more solid and consistent Church organization, with the maintenance of which we associate the name of Leo. Love must go before to teach and to win, before authority could follow to discipline, to organize, and to perpetuate ; and thus St. Severinus and St. Leo represent but two stages of the same activity. The labours of some of our own missionaries in India, are evidence enough to us that zeal and love are spent half in vain if there be no Church organization to back them ; and we do not need proofs to convince us that machinery and organization are but empty forms till they are ensouled by love.

The subject of this memoir is a man so great and so good, that so soon as we in any measure understand him we cannot but admire and revere his character. Singleness of aim, simplicity and sanctity of life, a lofty intelligence, indomitable energy, acknowledged power triumphant through difficulties, these are things which in and for themselves must rivet our attention and excite our interest ; they are qualities which are universal, which belong to no age or country, and in possessing which it is that

“ The truly great

Have all one age, and from one visible space
Shed influence. They both in power and act
Are permanent, and time is not with them
Save as it worketh through them, they in it.”

So far, then, we might be content to enter as we may into the character of Leo the Great, to sympathize with his efforts and rejoice in his successes ; to try and know him, in short, as a human character, one with us in human brotherhood, or, nearer still, in the communion of saints, without troubling ourselves much about the interval of time which separates us from him, or the condition, so different from ours, of custom and circumstance under which he lived. And this sort of knowledge of a character in history is, after all, at once the most interesting and the most important, because it is only by so knowing the men of past times that their characters can become united to us in human sympathies, fruitful for us of moral example and warning, or capable of animating us for struggles and victories like theirs. But if we are to rise, even in the humblest measure, to a right conception of the meaning which specially in modern times attaches itself to history, we cannot stop here, but must go on to ask of any character, how he came to be what he was : not what were the eternal and unchangeable conditions of life under which he lived, the same more or less for us as for him, but what were the special features of his age and country, its peculiarities, its differences from our own, and in what relation did he stand to all these ? was he, and in what degree was he, the product and representative to us of the social conditions of a time long past ?

And the character of Leo, interesting as it is in itself, is at least no less interesting in relation to his

time. He is a man pre-eminently *representative*. In an age like our own, where tendencies are so manifold, so complex, so contrary one to another, a man in any complete sense representative of the age is almost an impossibility. A man can feel the force of a great impulse and become the representative of a great cause, but how shall a man represent and embody various movements each in themselves hesitating, tentative, uncertain, and antagonistic each to the other, tending to no clear end or single issue, or tending at any rate to an issue and a unity far off and unforeseen? In such an age to be representative of any one tendency is to be antagonistic to a host of others, and no one of these can make good any special claim to belong to or to be the age. Or if a man be in any sense able to be in sympathy with the age in all its manifold feelings and wants, the character of such an one must so lose in definiteness of view or fixity of position that he becomes representative only in ceasing to be a consistent character at all. But the conditions under which Leo lived were wholly different. A struggle, simple and direct, was going on in the Church and in the State, and both these struggles turned upon a single issue: to grasp the one clear want of the age in its civil and religious aspects, to interpret this want, to rise up to supply and satisfy it, this was Leo's work. The tendencies of the age may be said to live in him, and find in him their interpretation.

Again, not only is he the representative of the age, but in any adequate sense he is its only representative :

we have had occasion to notice how in all the period of his greatest activity, he was the only great man, the only man of first-rate importance alive ; he was the theologian of the age, the administrator of the age, the governor of the age, the man of greatest intellect of the age, the representative also for the age of the power of civilization against the forces of barbarism. He was all this — the man of the Church at a moment when the Church was the important element in the world, the one all-important character in that period of history which is the meeting-point of the old world and the new. It is a period of which the significance and interest can hardly be overrated. It has a double aspect, “looking before and after” : it looks back upon the all-but-exhausted civilization of which it still wears the garb and bears the name : it looks forward into the dawning age, and is pregnant with prophecy and promise, laying down the lines and shaping the destinies of the world which is to be.

TABLE OF DATES.



A.D.

- 395 Death of Theodosius the Great ; accession of Honorius in the West, Arcadius in the East. St. Leo probably born *circa* 390-400.
- 397 Deaths of St. Ambrose and St. Martin of Tours.
- 402 St. Innocent I., Pope.
- 407 Death of St. Chrysostom.
- 408 Theodosius II., Emperor of the East.
- 410 Sack of Rome by Alaric and the Goths.
- 412 Pelagian Controversy.
- 417 Zosimus, Pope.
- 418 Boniface, Pope.
- 420 Death of St. Jerome.
- 422 St. Celestine I., Pope.
- 425 Valentinian III., Emperor of the West.
- 430 Vandals desolate Africa. Death of St. Augustine.
- 431 Council of Ephesus (3rd Œcumenical) Nestorius condemned.
- 432 Sixtus III., Pope.
- 440 St. Leo I., Pope.
- 444 Death of St. Cyril. Leo expels Manichæans from Rome.
- 445 Quarrel of St. Leo with St. Hilary of Arles.
- 448 Eutyches condemned at Constantinople.
- 449 "Robber Council" of Ephesus. Murder of St. Flavian. Anatolius succeeds him at Constantinople.
- 450 Marcian, Emperor of the East.

A.D.

- 451 Council of Chalcedon (4th Œcumenical). Dioscorus deposed. Proterius, his successor, murdered. Timothy "The Cat" usurps the see of Alexandria.
- 452 Encounter of Leo and Attila.
- 453 Death of Attila.
- 455 Maximus, Emperor of the West. Sack of Rome by Genseric. Avitus and Majorian, Emperors of the West.
- 457 Leo I., Emperor of the East.
- 458 Gennadius, Bishop of Constantinople.
- 460 Timothy Salophaciolus, Bishop of Alexandria. Triumph of the Orthodox cause.
- 461 Severus (Ricimir), Emperor of the West. Death of St. Leo.





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Leo the Great

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